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ALICE BRIDGE OF NORWICH.
By the Rev. ANDREW REED, B.A.

This Number contains a Complete Story, Unchanged and Unabridged.

Vol. LII. {DOUBLE NUMBER.} GEORGE MUNRO, PUBLISHER, Nos. 17 to 27 Vandewater Street, New York. {PRICE 20 CENTS.} No. 1059

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A TALE OF THE TIME OF CHARLES THE FIRST.

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Alice Bridge standing by her father in the pillory.

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Alice Bridge of Norwich:

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By the Rev. ANDREW REED, B.A.

DEDICATION.

This Tale is affectionately dedicated to the Wife and Children of the Author, for whom it was written, and by whose warm appreciation he was first encouraged.

The Book may also interest those Norwich friends who remember the writer's happy residence in their old City as a Christian Minister, where he gained that knowledge of localities, and that historic interest in the romance of Puritan times, which gave birth to this story, and lend it whatever attraction it may be found to possess.

The Author takes the opportunity to thank his dear brother, Sir Charles Reed, for many historical and antiquarian suggestions while the work was passing through the press, and for access to important papers.

May the volume help to revive the serious piety, the self-denying virtue, and the noble public spirit for which our Puritan ancestors were so distinguished.

St. Leonards-on-Sea,
October, 1879.

CHAPTER I.

TOMBLAND CLERK-ALE.

"On every spray blooms lovely May,
And balmy zephyrs breathe;
Ethereal splendor all above,
And beauty all beneath.

The cuckoo's song, the woods among,
Sounds sweetly as of old,
As bright and warm the sunbeams shine,—
Oh, why should hearts grow cold?"
Old Song.

An old rhyme says,

"Caistor was a city when Norwich was none,
And Norwich was built of Caistor stone,'—

in which is perpetuated the removal of the city from the Roman station of Caistor (Castrum), to the Norman *vicus* of the present Norwich. Vain-glorious little Caistor, whose stones and reputation were thus shamefully plundered, is still a village some three miles from Norwich.

The present City was brought together for shelter under the Castle, a royal fortress in a commanding situation, which then afforded the protection required for the prosecution of peaceful trades. The City was once one of England's chief places of wealth and strength. In the times of which we shall speak it was remarkable for a steadfast adherence to the cause of liberty as opposed to the despotism of the Stuarts. Norwich still remains a populous, active, manufacturing city, though its monopoly of the Flemish wares and of the Indian bombazine trade has passed away; and it still retains a conspicuous love of constitutional liberty, but of that quality also it can pretend to no monopoly at present.

Alice Bridge standing by her father in the pillory.

Just outside the precincts of its Cathedral, called the Close, there is a large open space surrounded by respectable mansions, which bears the quaint and melancholy name of Tombland, either from its having been a burying ground or from its being the scene of desperate conflicts between the City and the Close—a sort of debatable land claimed by both parties.

There are no graves now on Tombland, nor was it at all a melancholy spot on a certain Sunday of May, 1627, for the parish of St. George's was holding its clerk ale on the Green. The Green is intersected by a busy highway running down a gentle slope, and on either side tables were set out on the grassy triangles like booths at a fair, sheltered from the wind and weather by coverings of boughs or tent cloth. The tables were covered with pewter and earthenware mugs, while great jacks and tankards full of ale, together with large dishes of bread, meat, cheese, cakes, and butter, completed the provision for the expected feast. These attractive viands were sent in freely by the parishioners as presents to the Clerk, whose privilege it was to give the entertainment and realize the benefit of it. Like the landlord of a public-house, he charged ample payment on his guests, and thus by a double profit eked out his poor stipend.

A large share of the good things came from the Alderman's house, situated in Tombland, and those thought themselves happy who feasted on some of Dame Sherwood's cakes and pastry, for which she was famed through the City. Another liberal donor was the great Flemish manufacturer, Van Diense, who employed hundreds of weavers, and was at the head of that important industry. Nor were the Rector and his lady wanting in hearty liberality on the occasion of their Clerk's benefit. The Clerk's wife, with some of her gossips, was busily arranging the provisions in momentary expecta-

tion of the close of the afternoon service, and the arrival of parson, clerk, and congregation, who in those days finished their Sabbath by a direct transition from the house of God to a sort of Vanity Fair.

"Now, Maud," said the dame to one of her helpers whom she suspected of helping herself, "hands off Madam Sherwood's bakery."

"Good lack, friend, I was but giving your boy Will a bit of broken cake."

"Sukey, put these three cushions on the seats,—one for the Rector, who'll be weary of standing and discoursing; one for the Alderman, who has had his first twinge of the gout; and the other for my old man, who ought to be lifted up to-day—his fortieth clerk-ale."

"And it'll be his best as far as I see," said Gammer Golding; "never was our church so crammed by all sorts of citizens as gape after our good Rector—and never such store of ale and eatables—and this great pasty full of game ordered right over from Holland by the Fleming. See—— Oh, lack-a-day—mercy on me!"

As she spoke the great pasty took to sliding under her finger down the unlevel table, and all but fell to the earth. She did her best with her hands and knees to hold it up; but the thick gravy of which it was full being melted by the sun, ran out, and streamed over her best dress; and as Will Barnard dived under the table to assist her, the oily fluid poured over his brown hair and face, anointing him with a beauty hitherto unknown. After all these efforts they shrank from the greasy torrent, and down came the pasty, its contents being strewed over the grass and sand, and its thick crust turning over to open view.

"Good lack! what shall we do?" cried the Clerk's wife, coming up to the scene of disaster and routing several cocks and hens, from the savory morsels. "Their worships will be here anon. Help me, there's good friends, to put back the game into the great dish. Thank Heaven, the crust is whole. Never mind if there's no gravy,—they'll be none the wiser. The Dutch are a dry people, or it oozed out on the voyage; and if the meats have a little sand or gravel mixed with them, we must all 'eat a peck of dirt in our lives.' But oh, my boy Will, you look handsomer than I ever saw you; you are a shining light. There, go to the pump and wash your face and neck. Say naught about the mischance, neighbors, and you'll see the pasty will be eaten without a question to anybody."

The day was bright and balmy—one of those spring days when the wasting east wind has ceased to blow, and nature is revived by the approach of a sure herald of the coming summer; the birds celebrate their escape from dull skies and chill weather in lusty songs; and the opening buds clothe again with delicate green foliage the trees so long black and bare. The sun was yet high, for afternoon in those days was literally kept; and his rays gleamed from the windows of the houses, lighting up the bowery decorations erected for the feast; and the tall May-pole, festooned with flowers, marking the spot where games and dances were soon to rejoice the youths and maidens.

The merry sunshine struck down on the side of the Close, revealing the beauty and grandeur of the two handsome Gothic gate houses whose arches span its entrance, and one of which offers a lovely perspective of the basement of the Cathedral, with its vast portal, through whose open doors may be seen a dim vista of the symmetry of the Saxon interior. Well may the citizens be proud of their ancient fame, their elevated and noble castle, their spacious market, their numerous churches and handsome shops, their vast hall (St. Andrew's), suited to grace popular meetings and to respond to strains of music, while they awe the stranger by the information that Norwich is a county of itself, as well as a metropolis of East Anglia.

But hark! the deep notes of the St. George's church organ tremble through the air, blending with a choral burst of voices in the closing anthem of the worship. There is a pause. The doors are thrown open. Forth rush, like children from school, a host of youths, laughing, whistling, screaming, and letting off the spirits so long and gravely restrained. They have an object. They bear a chair ornamented with ribbons and fastened on poles. Now appears Jemmy Barnard, the Clerk, in his canonical robes, with dignity due to his fortieth feast-day. He takes his seat in the car, and, being hoisted on the lads' shoulders, is borne, with much shouting, round the open square.

At the Alderman's house, where the company appear at the window, the Clerk makes a point of rising to bow to his patron, and then is the opportunity of the mischievous youngsters to tip and shake the car, so as to disturb his equilibrium. Used as he has been to these tricks, a heavier lurch than usual makes him rock and sway so fearfully that his anxious wife, eying the procession from a distance, cannot help screaming, "Ye malapert urchins, hold the chair right; my Jem be not so young as he was. Our Will will give it you if you hurt his father."

Whether by her threats or the Clerk's recovered firmness, he was safely brought to the head of the upper table, where his wife took her seat by him, and set in order some of his bands and ruffles which had become disarranged in the chairing, saying, "You should have held fast by the chair-back, my old man."

Now hasten from church the common folk, arm in arm, to see and share the sport; then more leisurely appear the better dressed; the good Doctor Hope, with his daughter May; the lawyer Taylor, with his wife; the great Flemish merchant Van Diense, with tall Gerhardt, his head man of business, and some of his lusty weavers; Mr. Ridgeley, the rich goldsmith; and many more. These all line the path from the church gate, and pause, as if somewhat of more importance was arriving from behind. Presently comes a beadle, with silver mace, bearing himself erect and solemn; then about a dozen men, dressed in tight-fitting jerkin, and hose of white slashed with yellow, having masks on their faces, and pointed wooden swords in their hands. These are the *whifflers*, or Mayor's police; and by thrusting and striking with their wooden swords, yet never touching any one, and by their wonderfully agile movements, they keep the crowd in excellent order, and also in good humor. They soon make a clear way for the procession, while they are favorites with the mob.

Next appears a curious model of a huge dragon, awful to behold, and borne by a man whose head and shoulders are inside, whence he can make the great jaws open and shut to the equal diversion and terror of the children. To avoid his pursuit, some halfpence must be tossed into his mouth, when he turns elsewhere. As he moves into the crowd, some of the bolder lads lay hold of his long tail, but most of the smaller folk run screaming and flying at the top of their speed, and shouting, "Hare come old Snap!" Their speed is hastened and their cries silenced, as the great dragon, pursuing the hindmost, catches a little fellow by the breeches and holds him up in mid air, screaming aloud at his perilous elevation. But two or three elder boys turn bravely on the monster, and rescue their little comrade from the dragon's jaws at the expense of the boy's clothes, a considerable rent in which is only too evident when he is set down on the ground. The dragon flourishes the trophy sticking to his great teeth as a warning to all who might take unwarrantable liberties with him.

A few Aldermen follow in the train of the Mayor, and some of the Council in their crimson robes; and finally the portly Mayor, Francis Cocke, in his grand velvet robe, and with his massive gold chain, saluted by general cheers, in answer to which he bows cordially right and left. With him walks his friend Alderman Sherwood, together with the Rector, the Rev. William Bridge, in earnest converse,—an agreeable-looking man, in his ecclesiastical dress, with his lady on his arm, and his pretty little daughter Alice by his side.

These brought up the procession, and passing through the respectful and loyal lines of citizens, they took their seats at the Clerk's table. The parishioners followed their example, and were soon all seated. Those not of the parish were driven by the whifflers into a large outer ring of spectators. The windows of the houses overhead were open, and streamers and flags waved in the gentle breeze. Any stranger looking on must have owned the fitness of the title, "Merrie England."

Yes, it was then "Merrie England." The nation was one undivided whole, except a few Catholics who hid and plotted in secret. The Protestant Church was one with the nation; the civic body was one whole which embodied the traditions of Queen Elizabeth, who had healed all civil dissensions. The bitter spirit of civil war and insurrection had not rent society and the Church into permanent divisions. The officers of Church and State received the ready submission of all citizens who, without exception, were eligible to serve in those offices, or to enjoy every national privilege.

A more jovial assembly than this parish gathering could have been seen in no other country of the world. Most of the men wore some sort of defensive arm, from the knotted club torn from the forest oak to the polished rapier, or the dagger or heavy pistol in the waist-belt. They were mostly men of strong build, and with manly courage in their looks. Instead of jealous reserve, they showed a neighborly frankness; and while there were many diverse grades, yet the rich and poor seemed to respect and be attached to each other, rather than to cherish mutual aversion.

So prosperous and merry was the surface view of English society, even at a time when there were at work some terrible wrongs and perils, with bitter consequences below that surface. Soon was the desperate haughtiness and recklessness of one Rehoboam, with his evil counselors, to shatter that prosperous fabric of national welfare. Even the domestic happiness so precious to the English, and which more than anything else has entitled our land to be called "Merrie England" amid much trouble and conflict, was now to be subjected to the rudest trials; the father was to be set against the son, the brother against the brother, and even tender women were to think it their duty to be hostile to their husbands and children.

"Silence for the Rector, the Rev. W. Bridge!" is shouted by the town-crier with a voice that echoes over the wide Green. Every head bows, and the clergyman utters the "grace before meat." This done, they fall to stoutly, and the good things disappear.

Even the pasty is devoured eagerly, to the amusement of the women attendants, who, handing the last piece to the church-warden, whisper, "Didn't we say so?—no one asks for the gravy, nor objects to chewing a little gravel."

The Clerk's agents carefully gather the pence, silver, and gold of the guests in abundance. The ale goes round and tongues are loosed. Mirth becomes fast and furious. The Sabbath begins to be a little forgotten. The time has come for the better class to depart, and avoid the "end of a feast," which not seldom becomes "the beginning of a fray."

"Silence for his Worship the Mayor!" shouts the public crier again. His Worship rises with foaming cup in hand, and quaffs it off to "our right honored and beloved Sovereign His Majesty King Charles I.," at which toast there are repeated shouts of "Huzza! God bless the King! Long live the King!" with a few groans of "Down with the Queen and the Papishes."

Filling his glass again, the Mayor essays to suit the popular taste in the following address, not a little characteristic of the restricted partialities of Norwich, a city removed from either the intercourse or competition which moderates self-complacency:—

"There is in this world no country like our merrie, merrie England." Loud shouts arose, "Down with forayners!" "Down with the Pope and his crew!"

"There is in our England," continued the Mayor, "no city like our dear Norwich—our good old Norwich!" Louder still were the cries, "Down with Yarmouth!" "Up with our privileges!"

"There is in Norwich," continued the speaker, "no parish like this fair St. George's, Tombland, with its worthy Alderman, my friend Sherwood." On this the shouts were yet stronger—"Huzza for Alderman Sherwood!" "Down with St. Edmund's,—down with St. Peter's, down with the Close—down with the Close!" which swelled into a roar that all the people of the Close might hear.

The Mayor concluded his speech with, "Next to our worthy and beloved Rector."—At which renewed shouts arose of "Hurrah! a trusty Bridge—best preacher in the city!"—"There is no public officer more esteemed in this parish for his honesty and good-will than James Barnard, for these forty years our good Clerk. Let us drink to his health and wealth."

At this finish deafening shouts were heard of "Hurrah! Jemmy Barney forever!" "Well done, old codger!" "Hurrah for his wife!" "Jemmy Barney forever!"

When the excitement was over, the little round nervous Clerk was hoisted on the table and stammered a few words: "Thanks—honor—Worship—reverence—parish," concluding with many ducks of the head and by drinking, "My masters, here's to ye all;" while his wife

continually urged him from behind, saying, "Speak up, Jem!—what are ye afeard on?"

The assembly now broke up, though a few remained at the tables drinking, arguing, and singing songs and catches. The better class strolled homeward, and the more active prepared for the dances and games which crowned the day.

The Alderman took the Rector and his wife home with him. As they were turning from the Green, two fine boys rushed up crying, "Father, pray let us stay! the morris dancers are coming, and there will be leaping and shooting; our Tutor will take care of us." Their father assented, and they then attacked the Rector and his wife, "And please let Alice stay with us; we will take the greatest care of her."

The little girl's eyes brightened as she let them lead her away, giving a hand to each. They ran away to the may-pole, followed by a stout grave young man, whose dark brow and uneasy expression of face little agreed with his duties as the companion and guide of lively and innocent youth. He was the boys' Tutor, the Rev. Baldwin Green.

CHAPTER II.

THE ALDERMAN AND THE FLEMING.

"In the long vista of the years to roll,
Let me not see my country's honor fade!
O let me see our land retain her soul,
Her pride, her freedom,—and not freedom's shade!
Let me not see the patriot's high bequest,
Great Liberty,—how great in plain attire;
With the base purple of a Court oppressed,—
Bowing her head and ready to expire."

KEATS.

LET us follow the old motto, *Seniores priores*, and visit first the hospitable mansion of the then Alderman of Tombland. A few steps brought the party to Mr. Sherwood's house on the summit of the inclined slope of Tombland. It was built in a style resembling the Dutch architecture. Entering the spacious hall paved with stone, the party conversed awhile on the events of the day.

"Mistress Sherwood, I must congratulate you again," said the Rector's wife, "on your beautiful cakes and on your bountiful present to the feast. You are very good and clever."

"Oh, my dear, I deserve no thanks; there is nothing I like so much: my good mother taught me that, and little else. I'm never so happy as in my kitchen; a feast is a godsend to me—not to eat it, but to make and cook it. There's my goodman, who likes public life, justice rooms, Mayor's dinners and councils—let him enjoy them; give me a new recipe to make up, or a banquet to furnish out, or a sick person to cater for—there's my element."

"Sarah's blessing and Rebekah's be upon you," observed the Rector, "my good friend—only you don't deceive your husband with kid stuffed and sauced into venison."

"Not I; my dishes are all genuine and wholesome, I'll warrant," said the lady. "Now, did you taste that pie of the Fleming's? I did, for curiosity—there wasn't a drop of gravy, and I broke a tooth over it."

"I hope the Clerk will reap a good harvest," said the Rector.

"Yes," replied his wife; "his son Will told me it was the best ever gathered, and he was taking it in a bag to the Fleming's for safety."

"That's right," remarked the Alderman; "there are perilous thieves about—disbanded soldiers, I hear. Ladies, go with us up-stairs, where we can see the Green from our window."

"I must take Mistress Bridge to my kitchen first," replied his wife, "to taste some soup which I fear is on the turn, and some new spices, the hottest I ever had."

"My dear," said the Rector, "I wish you joy. I hope the soup will not give you a turn, nor the spice irritate your excellent temper. We shall welcome you presently."

The gentlemen ascended a polished oak staircase, and entered a large room with cheerful bay windows thrown open and freely admitting the joyous sights and sounds of the sportive company outside. Here the Rector could watch his flock, and the Alderman see after the good behavior of the people. Both soon spied out their happy children.

"There's my pretty friend Alice," said Mr. Sherhood. "Why, Snap is paying her his respects! The girl retreats, but keeps her face to the foe. Well done, Edward! Brave knight! he throws himself between. How's that? Snap turns to fly. See, that wild sprig George has slipped round and taken the monster by his tail. Snap writhes and plunges in vain, and marches off another way. Would that all public monsters were as easily managed! Let us take seats and chat over this tankard of sack and these pipes of soothing tobacco sent me by our worthy friend Van Diense, who will soon join us."

So they drew forward two large, creaking, high-backed elbow chairs, in whose seats were clean rushes; and they sat down before a rough oak table, resting on settles of the same wood. Their feet rested on the unplaned boards of the floor, also strewn with rushes. The ceiling of the room showed the bare plaster in cracks, and was daubed with indifferent whitewash. The walls were wainscoted with deep molded shields and cornices, while in several of the panels were rude paintings of commercial or religious subjects. Opposite the window was a sea port scene of a Dutch quay, at which a tub-like vessel was unloading merchandise. The owner was descending the steps to meet the captain and foreign merchants, in outlandish costumes and with very undefinable faces.

Over the mantel-piece was another painting, larger and more imposing. After much study, it might be supposed to represent the Magi visiting the infant Saviour. A grand ruin, with a lofty Grecian pillar in the center of an Italian landscape by no means Oriental, gave shelter in the dingy corner to a mother and babe. Three or four armed knights on rearing horses were preparing to alight. Their attendants, bearing valuable presents, were with difficulty discerned, being small figures on a very confused background. The tell-tale of the whole piece, however, was a flaming star of bright yellow, whose straight ray rested like a heavy beam on the head of the babe, and threatened to crush the whole company.

The room, thus somber and rather low, was made darker by the small panes, which, when the casement was closed, refused free access to the pure light of day.

The figures of the two men in this chamber would have seemed to us quaint and droll. Their clothes were of rough texture, and of loose and awkward fit. Their hair was long and flowing in curls, but the faces were as manly and intelligent as any of the present day. The Rector had the Saxon lightness of hair, eye, and complexion; the Alderman was darker and larger made. The former had a trimmed and pointed beard, while the latter wore his in full and curly fashion.

When fairly seated at ease, the Alderman first spoke, as pointing with his pipe to the motley and frolicsome assembly without, he said doubtfully, "And so you really approve of these kirk-ales, bid-ales, and clerk-ales? You don't think they produce more harm than good? I hope I may find it so in the justice-room to-morrow."

"Abuses," answered the clergyman, "condemn no custom which does not properly lead to them. These festivals recall to the people the dedication of their churches; they give occasion for liberality to their church officers and their poor neighbors; they incline many to attend service part of the day at least; they relieve the severity of religion, connect it with sociality, bring rich and poor together, compose feuds and differences, and resemble the love-feasts of the early Christians."

"What if I said, Mr. Rector, that they create quarrels, lead to excess and waste, sever the rich and poor, destroy the love of worship at other times, and are like the old saturnalia of the heathen? You cannot deny the riots, the tippling, sometimes the murders, which profane the Sabbath, and endanger the peace of the City."

The clergyman looked as an amiable man looks when an awkward discussion is impending—for an escape. His favorite method was a joke. So, crossing his legs, and with a little toss of his head, he replied, with playful distinctness, "Our Alderman prefers corporation-ales to clerk-ales; a drunken cobbler at the latter figures as a culprit, while a drunken alderman at the former is tenderly carried to bed as if he were sick. But after all, should not a holy day be also a holiday?"

"I know well, my reverend friend, that it is a dangerous matter to meddle with these ecclesiastical customs, now that the powerful Master Laud gives them his support. The justices, nevertheless, everywhere oppose them. The people of course like the revels, but why the clergy should turn the Sabbath into a riotous wake or fair I cannot understand. You will bring down a new Book of Sports upon you."

"Does not our retirement at the close of the clerk-ales end our approval and responsibility?" rejoined the clergyman. "We are not responsible for what goes on afterward."

"But it does go on, though," answered his opponent; "and I think we are responsible for not bringing it to an end."

"Surely that, my dear friend, were pushing into the rankest Puritanism. I thought you held that way quite common and unclean."

"Certainly Mother-Church calls nothing common or unclean," replied the civilian rather warmly, "in which it has a vested interest."

"The glory of God is above all," said the Rector. "I do not like all the Archbishop's movements, but I confess I thank him for vigorously upholding old Church customs. I am inclined to hope the best of our great Churchman's motives. There is in him a thoroughness about religion which bespeaks devotion. The independent temper of our times, when every Jack will have his conceit, and will sacrifice nothing for uniformity, demands firm and perhaps sharp dealing, though it sometimes verges toward persecution."

"Dear sir," said the Alderman, "I hope you may never be cited before the Star Chamber, or you would less admire your great Churchman."

"I fear I should prove but a falling star," the Rector said; "but firm and loyal as I am to my Church, such a thing is impossible. I am a Churchman to the backbone."

Just then the archery targets and leaping-poles were brought under their window, and some of the youth prepared to exercise at the manly sports dear to the English, and which fitted them for the stalwart part they played in many a foreign adventure and war by sea and land.

The Alderman went down-stairs, and brought up the ladies from their kitchen engagements to behold the youthful sports. When all were seated, the clergyman followed with a sort of running comment on the whole proceedings:—

"Here are the boys, with the Fleming, whom they all love, for a sort of umpire. And see, the Bishop's son, with some from the grammar school, and Will Barnard among them. They leap well over the stick now, for it is low; but as it rises peg after peg, they kick it over, or run under it. There is one who takes a long run, and gets over with great effort; others lightly walk up and bound over as on springs. Your boys, my friend, with young Wren, John Allen, Will Barnard, and some few more, are plainly the best jumpers. The Fleming surely raises the mark too high,—nay, it is all right. Well done, George! easily over!—and John and Will too. Edward just grazed; the Bishop's youngster shakes it down. How angry he is! He claims a fresh trial, which the Fleming allows. Again he fouls, and retires in wrath to the fat priest yonder, who comforts him. What! another peg! That is more than you and I used to do, friend, when we played such games. Well jumped, George! clean over!—see, Edward touches, and so does John, and Will sends it far away. Let us clap—they deserve it; and give George a cheer. My little Alice, too, is there, with May Hope and Allen's girls. Ladies, you must rise and show yourselves at the window to please the youngsters."

So the parents continued to watch many trials of strength and skill, in none of which would Stephen Wren engage after his first defeat. The success was various—sometimes Edward was first, occasionally John, oftener George, and more rarely Will; but these four were evidently the prime champions of Tombland, and were most courteous and good-tempered to each other, and to all competitors. The Fleming made them each valuable presents, and now offered others for the best shot at a target, and at a pigeon tied to the top of a pole by a string.

The Bishop's son now came forward, having received from a servant a splendid new bow decorated with ribbons and silver spangles, and a quiver of silver with arrows all ornamented, of which he was very proud, and seemed to think they insured him his triumph.

Dame Sherwood was nettled at this sight, and said, "I am sure I offered Edward, and George too, to trim their bows as finely as any bishop's; but they would not hear of it; and George said, in his wild way, 'Thank'ee, mother, but I'd be ashamed to be tricked out like a prize pig and

lose the prize after all. I like my worn brown shaft better.'"

"He was right," continued the clergyman, eager as any for the result. "They stand ready in line, the Bishop's son in the center—they let fly together. What a graceful arch and bending cloud!—many wide, several in the target, two or three in the inner circle, and the silver arrow, as all can see, only just within it.

"They choose fresh arrows, and aim with care—six of them—one after the other. George is close on the eye; so is John; Edward strikes it, and Will; but the Bishop's son is only on the rim of the circle.

"Now these five march some yards further off, measured by the Fleming, who inspects their bows and arrows, and urges young Wren to take off some fluttering ribbons that perplex his aim, and to accept a plainer arrow, which he does, though with displeasure.

"They shoot—all in the inner circle. Edward only hits the white. Hark to the cheers in which all join but the discomfited lordling. Alice is shouting and screaming for joy.

"But now the pole is hoisted, and the bird flutters in mock liberty. The five are ready,—the jumps and starts of the bird make the aim hard. Edward is wide; the bird alights, and Wren aims, but she flies aside. Will ruffles her feathers, so does John. George lets fly as she is at the extremity of her tether, and brings her right down. They all shout aloud, but Alice runs sobbing to her young friends, and they all turn away;—'tis the pretty bird they mourn for.

"See, the prizes are given,—to Edward for the target, to George for hitting the bird on the wing; to Will Barnard and John for touching the bird; and to young Wren for hitting the bull's eye once; but he refuses to take it, and retreats with his grand dishonored apparatus. As he departs there are sharp words between them, and I think I hear hissing. Wren turns back and threatens with his fist, on which George and Edward do the same. They will never spoil the games with a fight! No,—he retreats.

"See, the boys hold up their prizes to us! George has fetched Alice, and wiped her tears. We must appear at the window again."

The party having appeared and acknowledged the cheers, withdrew from the window, beckoning to the Fleming to come up and join them, as the sports were ended.

Philip Van Diense was a man in the early prime of life, tall, and of a fine figure, with graceful gestures. His dress was looser and fuller than the English costume, and when he removed his felt cap a noble square forehead was bared, quite white and unwrinkled, with fine black eyes moving languidly, and seeming to comprehend all without the effort of fixing on particulars, and quickly turning from outside objects to the visionary gaze on inward abstractions.

The cordial salutations over, he seated himself, and began quietly to puff the sweet fumes of his own present, without uttering a word.

"Well, Van Diense," asked the Alderman, "has your Dutch parson given you an awful screed of doctrine, or are you weary of the sports and shouts of the day—or why so moody? You Dutchmen have the silence of fish, and their cunning too. I never knew you in this still mood but you were charged with some thing unusually terrible. Out with it, friend! I verily believe you would read my death-doom as coolly as the town crier."

Very slowly between the puffs of curling smoke the merchant said, "I have, indeed, some things of consequence to say to you, as we are alone. You know I contrive to hear a little news."

"You are a very wizard for intelligence," said the Alderman, "and a very owl for guessing at its bearings. Nothing escapes you. I often think you must have more real consequence and relations with high circles than we know, or you are in league with the powers of darkness—only then you would hardly choose these worthy parsons as confidants. But why all this delay when the mine is ready to burst under us all?"

"I learn," quietly added the Fleming, "that the elections for members of the new Parliament are proceeding with much success on our side."

"Thank God!" said the Alderman; "your preamble is good."

"Parliament is needed," continued the Fleming, "for we are now at war not only with Spain and Austria, but also with France."

"With France!—and why?" exclaimed all his hearers at once.

"It is a secret yet; but when Buckingham was in Paris at the espousal of our Queen, he had the impudence to pay violent court to the French Queen. But he found that the Cardinal Richelieu was both his rival and his foe. He was sent home, and forbidden the French Court; and this is his revenge. It is said he is gone with our fleet to Rochelle, and that some disaster has happened."

"Nothing would be real disaster," said the Rector, "which would disgrace and remove him from the helm of our gallant State."

"Money being wanted for this war," added the Fleming, "Parliament must be summoned. Perhaps it may never meet, as the King is raising a foreign army of Germans to be brought over here as his guard. If this succeeds, there will be no Parliaments till Doomsday."

"There is some hope, however," said the Alderman, "in the relief from fresh loans when Parliament sits, and in the issue of brave John Hampden's resistance to ship-money."

"But," was the reply, "Hampden's appeal failed in the courts before corrupt judges, and the King has dispatched commissioners to solicit contributions of two hundred thousand pounds for the French war. From you, Master Sherwood, a large sum is expected; and I shall be heavily taxed. If these sums are paid, Parliament will never meet."

"Is this true? Can you be serious?" said the Alderman, now really showing anxiety. "You are far richer than I. Would I had never joined the Corporation! Alack! this aldermanic robe has dragged me into notice, and I must pay for it."

"Possibly the voice of discontent," continued the news teller, "may be so loud as to prevent the levy of these taxes. In Westminster, the Court candidates have lost their seats; good Archbishop Abbott, so long secluded for faithfully rebuking the Court, is restored to the primacy; the Earl of Bristol is released, with other victims of oppression, from the Tower. Some hundred knights and gentlemen so released are now favored by the people as members of the new House of Commons. These are hopeful signs. But there is a French war to be faced and an enforced benevolence to be paid or resisted. You and I, my friend, are sure to be marked as sheep for the King's shearers."

The Alderman gloomily but firmly replied, "I cannot pay it if I would, and I would not if I could; but the alternative is terrible."

"Then you must haste to London," said the merchant, "to see if you can make interest to escape, or swell the rising storm of complaint."

"Ah, true friend!" broke out the Alderman, "how calmly you look on these fearful times, when in a moment a prosperous and happy father sees before him ruin or a prison."

"Because," quietly said the Dutchman, "I believe in God, who will always deliver those who trust in Him," speaking with an emphasis which nothing had as yet drawn from him.

"The Rector, struck with the simple piety of the foreigner, interposed with "Certes, our friend is a good comforter; for not only doth Holy Scripture say, 'Acknowledge Him in all thy ways, and He shall direct thy paths,' but that we are to 'rejoice in tribulation;' wherefore be of good cheer, Master Alderman, for there shall no harm come to thee."

A slight ironical smile passed over the placid face of the Fleming as he continued, "I also hear that the Council has prohibited all controversies on Calvinism, so that our reverend friend's able defense of that system, now in the press, will not see the light."

"What!" gasped out the Rector, "when it is all printed and ready—the work of years! Shall the Arminians have it all their own way? Must paper and print fall to my proper loss, and the self-righteous heresy triumph?"

"God will preserve His truth," said the Fleming; "and we must see if the book cannot appear beyond seas. But this is not all. Jesuit spies of the Council and Queen are abroad. We are suspected; and our Bishop Wren, jealous of our good Rector's growing influence, will seek to silence him. An injunction is already out to forbid his afternoon lectures, on severe penalty."

"That will be a heavy blow," exclaimed Mr. Allen.

"Alas! alas!" groaned the lecturer; "evil times—evil times indeed! I would be at peace, and labor for the Lord and for my people. With this cursed Arminianism comes in profaneness, persecution, and Popery. Verily the devil is a mastsr politician."

"Only," said the Fleming, "he overreaches himself. I have named evils that touch you all, but I also see trouble before me. We Flemings have been tolerated in our religion because we have brought you wealth, but in the new temper of the times we are suspected. Wren is aiming to drive us back to our native land, or to do worse. This would incur the loss of all we have invested here, and would ruin England's most flourishing trade. Some of my friends have already removed, and others are making ready. I shall remain as long as possible."

The friends gazed on the Dutchman as he discussed his own disasters as calmly as theirs, and then, rising with English heartiness, offered him their hands. He received the friendly grasp warmly, but with some haste, as if he was afraid to trust his feelings, and then said, "I well know how true we are to each other. Let me advise our clergymen to keep at their posts, and to give no needless cause of provocation. I I must go to London,—so, Master Alderman, we can travel together, and there perhaps we may lighten the perils which threaten us all."

"Right glad shall I be of your company and advice," said his friend; "and 'tis known I meant to take my boys to Westminster School."

"Perhaps," interposed the Rector, "I may do something here with Bishop Wren, for your boys' Tutor is a great favorite at the Palace, and has offered——"

"As soon take a snake into your bosom," frigidly whispered the Fleming.

"What!" cried the Alderman. "How mean you—my Tutor."

"I have sure advice that he is a spy of the Court," replied his friend.

"Then he shall not darken my doors an hour longer," said the Alderman impetuously.

"Softly, softly!" urged the Fleming; "you are so hot—your chief fault, you English,—so extreme. Why, to discharge him would ruin you at once. You must watch him warily, and use him as your own tool. But show no suspicion."

"'Oh that I had the wings of a dove,'" sighed the good Rector, "'then would I flee away and be at rest.'"

"Your prayer may be answered sooner than you think," said Van Diense. "I have been forced to take to the wings of an exile for my religion, and now England is getting too hot for the Puritans, and some have already found a pilgrim-nest in the wilderness. I may yet welcome you to our free Holland."

"A greater trial I can hardly conceive," replied the Rector. "You foreigners take it more easily than we islanders. You soon pick up a strange tongue, while we should be ever dumb and deaf amidst all your life abroad. You have brought here a most valuable art, which makes you a national benefactor; and you have large commercial connections; but what possible good could I do in a strange land where I could not preach?"

"I shall never leave England—nor Norwich, as I think. I will not tempt Providence, which placed me here," said the Alderman.

"I must be hunted out like the hare from her warm hole before I quit England," rejoined Mr. Allen.

"But," said the Fleming, "if there were no good for you to do (and, truth to say, we have our clergy in abundance, and not such unworthy preachers either), yet, for my part, I have found exile a school in which there is much wisdom to be learned."

"My worthy friend," replied Bridge, "thanks for recalling me to that less flattering side of the matter, though still I trust so hard a school may not be appointed. I should be a fish out of water: the voyage would unnerve me; the strange looks and accents on landing—the want of home comforts—the strange food on table—other money to trade with—and to be looked on with jealousy and dislike, would be real trials. What if we were ill there?—strange doctors and nurses; and if death came, away from home, and never again to see England, and to be buried in a marsh or in a dyke! Good Lord, deliver us!"

Here the conversation came to an abrupt end by the sudden entrance of the very Tutor spoken of, followed by the boys and girls in seeming excitement.

Addressing the Alderman, the young man said, "Sir, I presume you will not allow me to be insulted and disobeyed by my pupils."

"Assuredly not; what have they done?"

"They were very aggravating at the shooting, sir, and refused to be guided by my advice."

"Our Tutor wanted us," explained George, "to allow the Bishop's son to win the prize which was offered to free competition."

"I represented to them," rejoined the Tutor, "that when the son of a prelate condescends to mix in the people's sports, he should be allowed some superiority."

Here the Fleming interposed, saying, "As umpire, I must say he had fair play, and a prize was offered him which he rudely spurned."

"He could hardly be expected to be set below his inferiors," persisted the Tutor: "all the clapping was reserved for others, while he was actually hissed; and after his failure George had the impertinence to say aloud,

'Silver and silk never save spilt milk;
The rough bow of yew hit the target true.'

Was not that insulting?"

"Father," replied George, "young Wren had wholly retired before those words were uttered."

"Then Edward," added the accuser, "took hold of the silk tassels of his beautiful bow, and tried to pull them off."

"Nay," said Edward, "I only seconded the advice of the umpire to remove them, or they would distract his sight, the issue of which was that his next shot was his best."

"Sir, I feel it to be my duty as Tutor to show you the difficulty I have in curbing boys of so plebeian a spirit, and I entreat you to order their submission."

"Father," said George, "it was all Wren's doing."

"We had no idea of offending," said Edward.

"Boys," said the Alderman, "you must heed your Tutor's advice. I hope you were not discourteous to the Bishop's son, though you beat him in practice. If so, I should judge your prizes forfeit, for they ought to reward conduct as well as skill. What is my friend Van Diense's opinion, who was on the spot?"

"As umpire and prize-giver, I must say I saw no ill conduct save that of young Wren. But I advise Master Green to let the matter drop,"—here he looked him steadily in the face —"for he has superiors who would not sanction his losing an important charge through his want of tact or temper."

The Tutor obviously winced, and said he was content with the explanations given. He hoped all would go right for the future.

But here George stood forward, prize in hand, and said, "Father, I cannot keep this prize. Wren acted badly, but I had no right to ridicule him; I did not keep my temper in check. I am glad I said nothing worse."

All were astonished at this frank self-judgment from one so young. The father took the prize, saying, "George, I will keep it till I think you deserve to receive it. You are acting well now, at all events."

"Take mine too, father," said Edward; "I had the same feelings."

This the Alderman refused, and the young people turned to leave the room. Alice came to George almost crying. "Oh, George, it was we who hissed him: you beat him fairly, and deserve the prize. It is so good of you to give it up. He made all the trouble."

CHAPTER III.

THE MUMMERS AND POCTHORPE.

"Like sportive deer they coursed about,
And shouted as they ran,
Turning to mirth all things on earth,
As only boyhood can,
While the usher sat remote from all,
A melancholy man."

HOOD.

THE young people having partly regained their merriment, rushed back to the May-pole, where the group of masquerading dancers was expected every minute. A buxom maid who attended on Alice, when she saw her young lady returning to the Green, ran after her, having also her own motives for wishing to see the show.

"So you would have left me behind, Mistress Alice?" she said, out of breath by running fast.

"Ah!" replied George at once, "trust you for that, Ann: and isn't Will Barnard to be in the dance?"

"You young rogue!" replied Ann; but turning the subject prudently, she added, looking round, "Where is his reverence the Tutor? You had some difference with him."

"He doesn't like to see us happy," said May. "He has been accusing the boys of bad behavior, when it was all the Bishop's son. Don't tell, Ann, but we hissed."

"Yes," cried Alice, "our boys beat him, and he was cross, and wouldn't take the last prize; but the Fleming set him down—didn't he, George?"

"Of all things," said Ann, "I can't bear a long sour face. I suppose he's too pious to be merry."

"Aye, but," said George, "there are those better than he who love a sportive game; doesn't the Fleming, and his sister Hannchen, as lively as a bird?—and are not they good people?"

"I love them," said Alice; "they tell us such nice Bible stories and fairy tales. But I wish the mummers would come—don't you, May?"

"Why don't they?" answered her friend. "How will they look? I'm half afraid."

"So am I," said Alice.

"Afraid!—with us, Alie!" said George, with such a good-humored, protecting look, that Ann burst out laughing, and said, "You're like a little husband already."

"So he is," cried little Alice; "that is,"—looking at Edward's rather clouded face,—"so you both are, aren't you? I like to be with you two. When I grow up, you shall both be my husbands—one on each side; then I shall be so safe and happy."

At this all the party laughed merrily.

A few words may be desirable here regarding the young folks, who will take a considerable part in our story.

Under a free and careless exterior, George possessed a quick and shrewd mind. He was well made, brave, and full of fun, while there was a singular reflectiveness and self-possession which hardly appeared natural to him.

Edward was smaller, quieter, fonder of scholar's learning; never passionate, as George often was; seldom in scrapes, as George was perpetually; yet resolute and spirited. Edward's thoughtfulness had little concern with practical life, but was more engaged with his own feelings and fancies.

Both brothers were the more attached to each other from these very differences. Both were fond of the little girls, who were their constant playmates and almost sisters.

Alice Bridge, tall of her years and slim, had some of the characteristic promise of rare beauty undeveloped. The dark glossy hair, arched brows, long eyelashes, and deep, tender dove's eyes, the straight thin nose, and small curved lips, marked her for admiration. She was shy and reserved at first, liable to sudden flashes of impetuousness, very frank to friends, conscientious, and always ready for unselfish kindness.

May was a fair blonde, with bright smiling face, of plumper figure, quick bustling movements, full of wit, mirth, and a little of the acid flavoring of irony.

It would be difficult to make pairs of these children, as their mutual intimacy shifted with their wayward moods. When either of the boys was gay and bright, the readiest response was found in May; but were they in trouble, then Alice was the confidante and comforter.

Their friends the Allens, children of the Reverend J. Allen, of a neighboring parish, were a sensible, spirited trio,—John, a smart and humorous youth, and Jane and Harriet, two very lovable girls.

As George announced the approaching dancers, whom they had long expected, the Tutor, who had been absent, came slowly up, saying, "Ye are hasty boys. I have been seeking you."

"Look," said Ann, "at jolly Friar Tuck. I wish all priests were as merry and honest."

"And I wonder," said Alice, on tiptoe, and clapping her hands in delight, "which is Will Barnard?"

"Look at that one," answered George—"the Moriscoe with scarlet sleeves hanging loose like ribbons: you may see how he keeps looking this way. That's Will, is it not, Ann?"

"Nonsense, silly boy! how should I know him from ne'er another? Yet it does look like."

"Oh, do look at that man on a horse!" said Alice."

"What," continued May, "with the crown on his head, and two daggers stuck into his cheeks?"

"That's the King of the May, or Robin Hood," replied Edward.

"His horse is pasteboard," remarked George. "You may see his own legs dangling below;—one might trip him up."

"Oh, don't try, please!" said Alice.

"Oh, do!" cried May. "But who is that funny fellow with a stick in his hand and a very queer man's head on it?"

"That's the fool, with his cockscomb, and bauble in his hand," said John.

"It's half the fun to hear what he says," cries George; "let's get nearer."

"Oh," exclaimed Harriet, "there's a beautiful woman with a crown, and a grand dress, and hair down to her waist, and a flower in her hand."

Said Edward, "That is Maid Marian, Queen of the May."

"It isn't her own hair," said George; "it's as coarse as rope tow."

Then John Allen, who was a great reader, told them that "Lady Marian was a brave knight's daughter who lived at Baynard Castle, near Sherwood Forest. After the shameful murder of Robin Hood, his wife entered a nunnery, and lived to visit the poor and sick. At Dunmow, where she was long a useful nun, there is still her tomb and effigy."

Alice sighed, and said, "I shall always love her memory, and I wish I may grow up to care for the poor, like her."

"Alice be a nun!" said laughing Harriet; "when the Wensum runs backward to the sea."

"'Tis the noblest life on earth," said Edward, gravely.

"One needn't be a nun for that," answered May. "You boys have vowed to serve the ladies."

Said George, "I prefer to be an armed knight of chivalry. None of your greasy monks or puling priests for me. Alice, I am your knight."

"I don't want a knight, but a friend; and I hate all fighting," was the young girl's quick reply.

"They want some money," added George. "See, the fool, and the Moriscoe, and the lover come this way, begging with their caps through the crowd. We must give something. Here comes the Moriscoe. Ann, what will you give him?"

As the three drew near, there was a great laugh, especially at the rabbit-headed man, whom the children called "Long ears."

The fool caught his ears, and cried, "Rabbit-skins to sell!"

The Moriscoe held out his cap, saying, "Let the fool sell—I'll take the money."

"Don't give it him—give it me!" cried the fool; and they jostled and scolded for the coins, which were pretty freely given. Presently the two caps stood before Ann, and a strife took place for her favor. She feigned to be confused, and held something in her hand.

"Now, good Mistress Ann," said the Moriscoe, "something for good-will."

"Gramercy, no!" quoth the fool; "she'll have none of you: she likes an outside fool better than an inside one."

"Let the fool have the jade's money," said the Moriscoe, getting savage; "I'm for truer coin."

"Go and set up thy sign of 'The Fox and Grapes,'" answered the fool, amid a roar of laughter. "Now, my dear," continued he, "your present; you can't make a fool of me too—that's a comfort."

"Well," said Ann, nothing daunted, "I'll give you as much as you have now in your cap."

"See here, good people, here's a good seven and sixpence."

"But is that your own cap?" said Ann.

The fool, quite staggered, for his whole dress was borrowed, could only say, "As much as anything that belongs to a fool."

The fool, trying to recover, now said, "There, give me as much as you hold in your hand."

"Right willingly," said Ann, and she held up a hair-pin.

"Good-bye, my lady," said the discomfited fool; "if that's all your pin-money, too clever by half."

"You're not half fool enough!" replied Ann, as he took himself away.

George would have taunted them, but his eye was on the Tutor and Rabbit-head, between whom he detected signs of recognition. In the animation of the dialogue, Rabbit-head handed his cap to the Tutor, who put something in it, and then whispered to the holder. George

managed to shuffle nearer, and, straining his ears, heard the words, "when all this is over." This he concluded to be an assignation for a meeting when the company had dispersed; and he resolved, if possible, to remain, and see what took place.

Now the people began to dance with the mummers about the May-pole. The Moriscoe, getting over his jealousy, persuaded the willing Ann to give him her hand, and they were soon laughing over her rebuffs to the fool, and perhaps to the Tutor also. The party of children also had joined heartily in the dance with great glee.

All at once they saw the Bishop's son reappearing on the scene—Stephen Wren, a thin, tall youth with white hair and a cold, red eye. He haughtily pressed up near to Alice, and offered to dance with her.

Alice made a very civil excuse: "I do not wish to dance any more, thank you, sir."

He had the rudeness to reply, "You must; there's no one else I can ask. I like dancing—so you must."

Alice, glowing with exercise and indignation, drew up her small figure, put his hand aside with dignity, and answered, "*Must* is for babies. Remember you are a gentleman. I have said No."

The youth, nettled, and forgetting himself in his eagerness, answered, "You should feel honored to be asked by the Bishop's son," and tried to force her hand.

Edward, seeing her excitement, put Alice behind him, and said to Wren, "What do you mean? You shall answer for this."

Still more enraged, the young fellow tried to push Edward aside, not being used to yield his own pleasure to any one. He was the elder and stronger, but suddenly George pushed him and tripped his foot, and he measured his length on the grass. Maddened by this utter defeat, he rose, exclaiming, "Come on, you low fellows, one or both,—as many as you will!"

Edward advanced to meet the challenge, but George, interposing, said, "See the girls safe home, brother," while he assumed the attitude of English defense, crying out, "Come on, then, you scoundrel!"

They exchanged a few blows, in which George, though far younger, seemed gaining on his antagonist. Amid his fury, George was caught by the sleeve, and, looking round, saw that he was in the heart of a fierce combat between the men of Pocthorpe and the other citizens. His former enemies were lost to his sight. The Pocthorpe guild had turned out in force: weapons keener than fists were drawn, blood was flowing, hard strokes and thrusts were falling; the wounded and dead lay on the ground; the hoarse, fiendish cries of war rent his ear. In his eagerness he was severed from all his friends, and was in the hands of a wild, dirty-looking fellow fresh from the orgies of Pocthorpe.

Most old cities have a suburb which becomes the resort of the dangerous class of its population. Pocthorpe is one of these excrescences upon the fair old city of Norwich. Once, doubtless, it was a prosperous and handsome suburb, as many of the large houses still show. The gardens and meadows then attached to them have been long since built thickly over; the place has been darkened and crowded by an ever-increasing swarm of outcast human beings.

Pocthorpe tried to ape the city. It had its mayor and aldermen, town clerk, whifflers,—even its dragon-snap, and all the civic paraphernalia of a chartered guild. When the procession of the city guild went abroad, it was not uncommon for it to meet this coarse, undignified rival, marshaled over against it, and stopping the thoroughfare. Fearful was the struggle which then ensued! The two dragons, even, had been known to be seized with the *rabies pugnandi* when all around paused to witness so curious a struggle. They advanced towards each other lifting their towering crests, opening and shutting their enormous jaws, and lashing their tails behind, with roars and hisses, endeavoring to butt or seize each other. Hideous was the crash when the skin was torn from the side of the city Snap, and the interior indecorously uncovered, when it turned tail and fled, to avoid a too close inspection of its secrets.

Such a fight was now raging around our luckless hero, who, however, no sooner discovered his position, than, shaking himself loose from his fierce captor, and diving under his legs, he dashed through the fighting throng and joined the outside ring of spectators.

Soon after George had thus secured himself, the Mayor and the array of citizens, hastily summoned, charged the Pocthorpians, and drove them back to their own quarters. With the rapidity of a Levant storm—soon rising and soon over—the place was speedily quiet. Among those whom a clear moonlight showed lying on the ground, oftener stunned than seriously hurt, were some of the poor mummers who had been unwillingly caught in the thick of the combat. The king and his hobby-horse had been parted, and his crown lay trodden in the dust. The Spaniard's cloak, the fool's cap, the maiden's yellow hair, were among the spoil. Remote from the rest, George discerned the prostrate form of Rabbit-head, and found him so unconscious that he stripped him of his fanciful mask, which he at once placed on his own person. Almost as soon as he had done this, he heard a voice behind, "You are late—follow me!"

He turned, and saw his Tutor walking fast toward the upper gateway of the Close. He hesitated not to follow. Within the gate, the Tutor disappeared under a side arch which led by narrow stairs to a room over the gate itself.

The great Erpingham Gateway is one of the noblest of ecclesiastical buildings of its kind. Sir Thomas Erpingham was the brave leader of the archers at Agincourt who gave the sign for the beginning of the battle by throwing up his truncheon, and crying, "Now strike!" He, like Lord Cobham, seems to have inclined to the Lollard faith; but though brave in war, shrank from martyrdom. Spencer, the then Bishop of Norwich, was a truculent and war-like prelate, who said "if he found Lollards in his diocese, he would make them hop headless or fry a fagot." Erpingham submitted to authority, and had to buy his pardon by building this gateway, and renouncing all heresy.

Over the pediment of the splendid gate kneels the knight, forever penitent. Still, it is supposed that he took his silent revenge in two figures which surmount the buttresses on either side of his own effigy,—one a secular priest, who sits and patiently teaches a youth at his side; the other a regular priest, who looks off his book and idly gazes at the passengers around. Thus he signified his opinion of the superiority of the secular clergy, who labored to teach and benefit the people, to the sacerdotal body, who kept up the forms of worship to benefit themselves.

The Tutor was already awaiting our hero, and, facing him, exclaimed, "Why, man, how long have I waited!—were you hurt in the hurly burly? I took good care to avoid it. Here is the guerdon;—now haste after the work thou wottest of. There, haste!"

As George was reluctantly quitting the chamber, he spied a large chest standing a foot or so from the wall, and near the door, and at once thought of slipping behind it, so as to watch the further doings of his Tutor. He was, however, passing it, and descending a step or two, when he heard below a gruff voice crying to the warder "Benedicite!" and a heavy tread began to ascend the stairs. To be caught between the two was far from pleasant, so he returned, and squeezed himself between the box and the wall while the Tutor's back was turned. Up, up, came the tread, and glad was George to see at last the form of the fat priest already mentioned. He felt that if he were discovered he should be no mean match for two such enemies.

"Pax mi fili!" panted the exhausted clergyman, whom the Tutor met at the door with the greatest reverence: "this is rather like a roost for bats and owls than a fit scene for a conference between two holy servants of the Church on matters of State concern. First, however, let us close the door, and be sure we are alone."

"Now, Father Christopher, thus on my knees do I seek the blessing of my worthy superior;" and the young Tutor knelt, and bent his head low.

The blessing was hastily uttered.

"Now to our holy business," sactimoniously urged the superior. "How have you succeeded in the plans we agreed on, by the blessing of the Mother of God, at our last meeting? There is great need of money: hast thou secured it?"

"Holy Father, all is ready, and to-night the soldiers are engaged to break in."

"What, my son!" interrupted the Father, "speakest thou as of ordinary plunder?—thou shouldest sanctify thy phraseology—'These soldiers of the Cross,' sayest thou, 'are by the aid of the saints about to call to account the heretic Fleming for his ill-gotten wealth, and to tax him for the glory of God.' Have respect to distinctions, my dear son!"

"It is well, Father; but be pleased to hear the facts. This Fleming ever keeps in his house much gold. To night I have sure news of large sums from Holland—with moneys from the Mayor; and the gathering at the clerk-ale will be lodged in his coffers. An old beggar-woman has at last wormed out of a servant the place of the treasure, and has told me the way into the house. The soldiers are drinking together, and will be ready by midnight. So let the Fleming look to himself. I have sworn to be his match at last."

"Beware, my son,—*superbia, superbia,*—and vengeance."

"May we only have a good round sum to send to Court to-morrow! Men speak of thousands in the Fleming's chest."

"And the Queen needs all," said the superior, "if this foreign army is to be maintained, by which only the King can rule without Parliaments,—tax his own subjects as a sovereign,—choose his own religion, and theirs also, according to his true desire."

"But these Puritans grow apace. They have plausible arguments, and much power. What if they get the upper hand!"

"The mercy of God forefend! Know, my son, that in our Church is the wisdom of the serpent and the harmlessness of the dove. Thou wouldst laugh to see some of our religion ever near the Duke to keep Puritans away;—yes, and others with the Puritan dress and speech—so like as to deceive even the very elect—acting as if born to that way. Yes, the Oxford and Cambridge scholars shall see to their woful experience that we can act the Puritan better than they the Jesuit."

"By the bye, my son, about that wild young pupil of thine. He must come over to the Palace to-morrow to apologize to Stephen. It will never do to allow the son of a city alderman publicly to affront a prelate. It will not be amiss if the lad's heat make him refuse to render amends; that would bring a crisis, of course,"—at which he winked very significantly. "Thou wilt do thy best to bring him to a proper submission?"

"I fear, Father, that springald cannot be brought to yield; he is a branch of a tough English yew."

"Of whom it is thy part to make a good Catholic bow. Remember, failure in God's cause is impossible. Instruments may be changed, broken, flung away,—the cause must prosper. Already thou hast once been found wanting, and thy work and place altered. Watch and pray, lest thou enter into temptation. I am not finding fault, my son: I think thee shrewd and zealous beyond most; only persevere. And now we may depart. Call the warder up."

The Tutor made his way to the door and unfastened it. The warder entered with a lamp. The door was ajar for a moment while they conferred together. The lamp cast a shadow by the help of which George, panting for escape, noiselessly slipped from his hole, and fled down the stairs, leaving behind the disguise he had used. Pausing a little in his road, he heard the steps of some one rapidly overtaking him, and, looking round, saw the Tutor. Did he suspect, or know, what he had done?

"Why, George, out so late!" said he,—"and whither?"

"Only on an errand," coolly replied the lad. "Where may you be going?"

"That is of no consequence. How did you escape from the Pocthorpians?—you seemed in some danger."

"I was delivered by the charge the citizens made on them. Did I not see you walking away with Rabbit-head toward the Close?"

"George, you are too meddlesome for a boy. I warn you to let other folks alone, or you will come to evil. Even now your quarrel with Stephen Wren will expose you to trouble. You will have to appear at the Palace to-morrow, and on your knees to ask pardon."

"It was no fault of mine;—he was rude to refuse the prize, and rude to Alice; and I did right, and will not ask pardon of any one."

So they parted; and the Tutor had gained his point.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CASTLE MEADOW HOME ATTACKED.

"Der Mensch kann was er will—wenn er will was er soll:
In diesem ist dass Mass der Mannes tugend-voll,
Das ist der Zauberbrand womit du alles still'st
Wolle nur was du soll'st—so kanst du was du will'st."

When George was free to pursue his course, he turned into a side-street, and so reached the slope of the Castle Hill, which he ascended more leisurely. His eye wandered over a striking scene, illumined by the rich light of a full moon, high and clear overhead.

The square, imposing figure of the old Norman castle, with its solid masonry, narrow battlements, flat walls, and lights gleaming from its windows, was full in view. There it stood like a giant warder on its natural hill, with a wide moat or ditch at the foot of the slope, its drawbridge and portcullis complete, the sentries pacing about and giving the word of challenge from time to time.

It was the ancient fort of Venta, capital of the Iceni, the kingdom of stern Boadicea; and after passing through Saxon and Norman hands, belonged to the Bigod family for many generations, until seized by the Crown. The tower over the entrance gate was always called Bigod's Tower.

Below the castle, on all sides, like chickens under the wing of the hen, crowded the various quarters of the city, diversified by many parish greens and large private gardens, which allowed umbrageous trees and shrubs to blend their lively verdure with the red and gray of brick and stone.

Beyond the walls of the city the ground again swelled into hill and heath and wood over the suburbs. On so bright a night the eye discerned the numerous church towers, and towering above the rest the elegant cathedral spire shooting poplar-like into the sky, and concentring the panoramic view. Even the shimmer of the quiet river Wensum, flowing down the valley toward Thorpe, showed where once rolled a wide arm of the eastern sea.

The night was still, and the "sweet regent of the sky, silvering over all she looked on," calmed the chafed spirit of the youth. Instinctively he paused to utter the Lord's prayer, as a sort of charm to prosper him and extricate him from his present difficulties.

The deep bell of St. Peter's, Mancroft, sounded out the hour of ten, and the other church clocks followed suit for some minutes. George, eager to bear his message, and then return home, if possible, moved quickly across the meadow, and round the castle to the Fleming's.

All at once Will Barnard crossed his path, exclaiming, "You, Master George!—what do you here?"

"I am going to Master Van Diense's," replied George. "Will you go with me?"

"I have to go to the Rector's," said Will.

"No doubt—to bid good-night to Ann; but will you call and tell my father where I have gone, and that there is good reason for my staying with the Fleming till the morning?"

They parted; and George thought, "What a trusty fellow that is!—with a few more like him, what a regiment of prime soldiers one would command! England may want such one day. I am glad I met him now, for the Fleming will have none too many with him to-night. I wonder how many soldiers are likely to attack. No doubt those two whom I saw the Tutor conversing with;—but will there be more?"

By this time George was at the door of a large house standing nearly alone at the corner where now Orford Hill begins; but the house has left no trace of identity. George did not hesitate to enter, for between him and the Fleming there was a strong mutual liking. The fire and shrewdness of the youth pleased the phlegmatic Dutchman, and the boy venerated the cool masterly view that the foreigner took of all matters. He was often invited to the house, and his natural sagacity had been greatly matured by his intercourse with this experienced friend. Instead, therefore, of going up the steps to the great hall door, George tapped at a side entrance on the basement, where, on being admitted, he found Hannchen Van Diense intent on some culinary mysteries ere retiring for the night.

"Why, George," she said, "you wild boy!—but you look tired and faint—is anything the matter?"

"I wanted a word with your brother, lady. You know I go to school in a few days."

"I am sorry you go so far off. What will your white lily do without her brothers?"

"That makes me sad when I think of it; but I do want to see the world, and to prepare to be a man."

"Well, George, you must both be the Knights of the White Lily while you are away, and do nothing of which your pure sister Alice would be ashamed."

"God helping us, lady."

"Now begone, for my saucepan is just about to boil. You will find my brother in the 'keeping-room.'"

George therefore ascended to the upper floor, and there found the Fleming smoking his evening pipe before a snug fire. He was reading his favorite book, "The Colloquies of Erasmus."

"Ah, George!—shut the door—sit down. You are tired, and I reckon you would not be here at this hour without having something worth telling."

With some flurry, which, however, went off before the perfect immovability of his hearer, George related his night adventure. As he stated that in a short time the house would be attacked, the Fleming only listened rather more carefully, puffed more rapidly, and when he finished smiled most reassuringly, and said, "Rogues usually catch themselves—if you give them rope. Honesty will outwit knavery always, if it has but good sense and presence of mind."

"But," cried George, "they are to be here so soon—soldiers too,—and we are alone! Should you not escape, or let me go and bring assistance?"

"Nay, my good lad, I am not so defenseless as you think. These fellows are half out-witted already. If they try their bungling plan, they may find that a dozen Jesuits with dark lanterns are no match for a single honest man with his eyes wide open. Every one knows that I have money—my own, and that of neighbors to keep—which would not be trusted to me if I was not considered resolute and able to defend the trust."

To which George answered, "This day I know it was resolved to send the clerk's bag to you for that very reason."

"Well, it is odd that to-day I have no other money here but that small sum: I sent it all away last night."

"Why, they think you have thousands!" said George.

"So it is, I assure you," was the reply. "Our old char-woman, gathering up hints carefully dropped, has told them of a way to enter below, but she has not told them that I have an iron door at the head of the stairs shutting off the upper rooms."

"That's capital!" said George; "they may break their fists and tools on an iron door."

"Besides," continued the host, "she has told them where my iron safe is; but it does not follow that my money is kept there, which it never is."

"Better and better!" exclaimed George.

"Then they think I am alone here; but my headman, Gerhardt, lives at the bottom of the garden, and a wire reaches to his house from my room, which I have but to pull, when he and many stout fellows from my weavers will silently gather to defend me. Let these fellows come: they will find an entrance which leaves them outside, a safe with nothing in it, and a trap which they may force, but can only leave on my conditions."

"Bravo!" cried George, with heightened color. "You are always ready; catch you napping, indeed! As we are safe, and there is time, please advise me what I shall do to-morrow at the Palace. I cannot apologize to that impudent fellow because he is a Bishop's son, and yet if I don't it will be an awkward scrape."

"Silly boy!" replied Van Diense, filling his pipe again; "what harm will a few words of civil excuse do you? By hotheadedness you play their game."

"How would you act in my place, dear sir?"

"Go in straight and anticipate them all. Don't let them accuse you. Politely regret to the upstart the scuffle you were drawn into; hope he suffered no evil effects; say you probably misunderstood his meaning. Don't be drawn into explaining causes and motives; treat it as past and forgotten. Be cool and wary. You'll see them surprised and vexed that they can make nothing of you, and you will defeat their malice."

"But then, sir, the Bishop,—he will question and insist."

"The Bishop!—ten chances to one he blames his son, and makes him also say he is sorry, and then you shake hands and retire in triumph."

"Well, that's what I should never have dreamt of," said George; "and I don't know if I can. I fear I shall be smiting with my fist instead of shaking hands, and quarreling with the fat priest at the Bishop's table. Then if young Wren speaks of Alice, I know I shall fly out. But I will try your way. I wish I had your temper."

"My dear boy, that comes by trial and Heaven's help. I was as hasty as you once. I have had many sore sorrows, but have learnt to say, 'Fret not thyself because of evil doers. Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him. Commit thy way unto Him, and He shall bring it to pass.'"

There was something so genuine in the Fleming's utterance, so full of the secret of his soul, that George was struck by the contrast between him and the two sanctimonious priests—deceiving each other, plotting against all men, devising horrid crimes,—all in the language and service of religion.

As they thus spoke, the sister entered to remind them of the late hour, when a sudden knock was heard at the lower door, and George in excitement said, "Here they are—so early!" Then pausing, and hearing a whistle, he said, "Nay, it's only Will Barnard. I told him to come, and to whistle." Down he ran, and soon returned with Will, who looked moody and taciturn.

The Fleming motioned them to seats, and reaching a folio Bible in black letter, and with silver clasps, opened at the ninety-first Psalm, which he read in a clear and tremulous voice, as if to say, "This is the only thing in the world which really moves me, and hence I draw my peace and trust." Hannchen gazed proudly on the brother who was her best friend, and pastor too. He knelt with them, and poured out a profoundly simple and moving prayer. As they rose, George said with eyes full of tears, "I feel now as if I don't care what happens. I don't wonder, my friend, you are so brave."

Then Van Diense, putting his arm round his sister's waist, added, "My Hannchen will not be alarmed if I say that a silly trick is likely to be played on us to-night, which these friends are come to warn us of."

"What is it, dear brother? Is there real danger?"

"Only some drunken soldiers who think to enter our kitchen, but who can get no further, nor do any harm, but whom we shall catch and make use of."

"Oh, brother! I hope you will not put yourself in their way: be careful!" Then suddenly clasping her hands, and darting from her brother's hold, she exclaimed, "Alack! my good loaves and cakes of to-day's baking, and the great pot of soup simmering on the grate! George, come and carry these away from the wretches."

"Nay, sister, never fear!—they seek higher game than bread or porridge. Better take this keg of Hollands to finish their ruin;—but no, let things be as they are. I propose to tell you meanwhile, out of the *Reineke Fuchs*, how the fox cleverly entrapped the bear and the cat, his formidable enemies, who had sworn his destruction."

Lively was the interest shown in his stories, and merry though low their laughter. George was just saying to Van Diense, "You are a great deal like *Reineke Fuchs* in some things, for——" when a noise of wood crashing, and then of suppressed talking, satisfied the party that the foe they were expecting was already on the premises.

George was starting off down-stairs to meet the adversary; but the Fleming laid his hand on his shoulder, and said, "Let us be quiet, and give them time to enter the trap. Sister, come away up-stairs. We will look from the window as we pass, and give the alarm to my men. See! look out of this window—but no noise." The moon still shone forth splendidly, and by her clear light they saw the red coats of three soldiers, one of whom was in the act of climbing through a breach. One of the three staid awhile outside as a sentinel, but he soon followed his comrades, greedy for the spoil.

"Now is the time," whispered the Fleming; "stay you here, and I will give the signal."

Then was heard a gentle rustling round the wall toward the garden. Looking over the

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garden to the house of the foreman at its end, a light could be seen to glimmer at an upper window, and then it was removed. This answer showed that friends were awake and preparing. The Fleming's loyal body-guard was as prompt and faithful to their master's call as the guard of the greatest monarchs. Slowly a file of men crept along under the shadow of one of the walls, and, emerging into the yard, proceeded under shadow to spread around the house. They then more rapidly closed in, so as to occupy every window and entrance.

"We may now descend," said the Fleming, "and parley with these fellows: they are completely in our power. There is nothing like stealing a march on the wicked. You will soon see what spiritless cowards these braggarts are. I'll make them lick my shoes, or do anything I order."

"Come on!" cried George, excited by the strange scene.

"A crushed snake will bite to the last," muttered Will; "take care what you do, sir."

"It will, if you don't crush it thoroughly," rejoined the unmoved Fleming; "follow me."

While descending, they heard loud noises—even bursts of rude merriment, mingled with breakings and clashings, as if liquor and mischief had caused the burglars to lose all idea of danger to themselves. Now they seemed to be mounting the stairs with uncertain tread, jostling and cursing each other, when suddenly Van Diense's penetrating voice was heard saying, as in joke, "What now, my masters?—Who are you? Have you lost your way, and come here by mistake? You have broken my sister's sleep. Begone speedily to your homes."

There was a dead silence—then more whispering—a rush brought to a dead stand before the iron door—a pushing and shaking, wholly vain. "Curses on the door!" cried one: "where's your pick, Jemmy? Let's have at the Dutch fool and his money-bags. You vile old miser! come, give up your jolly purse to the King's soldiers, or you're a dead man."

"Come and take it," quietly replied the Fleming.

"Curse the old lying hag, Maud! why didn't she tell of this door?" then lifting his voice to a threatening shout, "How now, you Dutch fellow! will you resist the King's soldiers with a warrant of Council to search your house and papers? You were better open in time."

"Why, you have opened, and are got in," said Van Diense. "Come, my fine rogues, I am not alone nor unarmed: here are two stout friends with me, and we know what to do with our weapons. You have got in, but to get out again I promise you is not so easy, for the hole you made is earthed up and stopped, and a dozen strong weaver-boys are watching for you outside. You should not let us know when you mean to come. I have you safe enough this time."

Now they were heard conferring, and then retreating in haste. Presently there were exclamations of surprise and terror, coupled with horrible oaths and blasphemies.

At last one of them came to the door, and said in a whining tone, "Your Honor is too clever for us: you won't be hard on poor drunken beggars that stole in for a supper and a stray leg of mutton."

"That I don't believe," replied the Fleming: "you talked of treasure, and the King and Council. I have a right to shoot you all, or to seize you and deliver you to prison; but if you tell me who sent you, and what for, I won't be too hard, and I may even give you a better job and better pay. What say you?"

"Long life to your Honor! You have fairly caught us, and we will serve you body and soul. We are true men to those who pay well; but if we are caged, we must make the best terms for liberty, and change masters."

On this the Fleming was about to unfasten the door, when Will, with a terrified face, caught him by the arm and begged him for his life not to think of meeting them. "They are the most canting villains, and will think nothing of shooting you down."

The Fleming answered, "Think you I cannot tell the tones of real fear from those of hypocrisy? The hounds are properly alarmed, and will do anything to escape. Follow me."

Even George was on the point of joining his entreaty to Will's, when the door was flung open. The wretches seeing the Fleming's bold entrance, staggered back some paces, and then stood at bay in the middle of the kitchen with their weapons in hand—three debauched and desperate ruffians.

The Fleming coolly took a seat—still keeping his keen eye on the fellows as one looks down a wild dog or bull, and laughingly said, "What brazen head told you to come here to-night—and what for? You have tried your worst, and have failed. Tell me no lies, or Friar Bacon's ghost will punish you."

"I suppose you know already," answered the spokesman. "What's a secret when it's blown? Father Christopher sent us here, through his young sour-faced spy—a murrain to them both! We were to rob your treasure chest, for the Queen and the Pope; but we've got ourselves into a scrape instead."

"No doubt you were to be well paid," said Van Diense.

The fellow's eyes twinkled, and he was about to speak, but checked himself, saying, "This is no time for a false bargain: in truth, we were to have a score of gold nobles between us—besides," roughly laughing, "what stuck to our fingers of the treasure—a good dinner, and—and," he added seriously, but half-ashamed of his own earnestness, "and the Father's absolution."

"You have made a bad hand of it," said the Fleming. "I am afraid you won't get anything—not even the absolution. Your heads are in the worst halter you ever feared: a touch of my hand, and you never earn a gold piece or eat a good meal more. If you escape, your worthy employers will set on you; and you best know what you may expect from them. You have no claim on me; but suppose I show you a way out of your scrape—enable you to pacify your employers—put you in the way of doing good service to me and your country without peril to yourselves, and maybe to win as many gold pieces as you have lost,—what then?"

Here he paused, and the men soon replied, "We'll never have done drinking your Honor's health! We'll serve your Honor, and no one else, to the end of your days, while such terms last."

"Nay, fellows!" sternly answered the Fleming, "not so fast! I have plenty of true servants who would not eat with such as you. Never stare at me: I hire no thieves or cut-throats. I only want to get back from thieves what they have no right to: 'Set a thief to catch a thief,' you know. When one hunts vermin, one must use ferrets and weasels. I know well how far I can trust such as you."

Never were men so cowed and abased under this cutting rebuke, uttered without provoking heat, in the most cold and contemptuous matter-of-fact tone.

"Very well,—an' it like your Honor," was the submissive reply. "What are we to do?"

"That I'll tell you presently. George, go to the door yonder, and call in Gerhardt Huyghens. And you, Will, open that cupboard, and set bread and meat before these fellows; but, as you live, nothing stronger than water till they've done my work."

The spiritless burglars were soon discussing mine host's good fare by the light of a candle which half-revealed and half-hid the strange scene in that clean, tidy kitchen.

The barred shutter was soon removed, and a tall, powerful, Dutch-looking man entered, and taking off his cap to his master, said, looking round the room, and taking all in, "Good—good!—very well done!

> 'He caught them, and tamed them, and set them free,
> And sent them away in directions three,
> Saying, Go worry my foes for me.'"

With a slight chuckle, he awaited the orders of his master, who had privately dispatched George up-stairs to quiet his sister's anxieties, and tell her the present state of matters.

Gerhardt was a man in his prime, of rather awkward figure. He had a habit of keeping both hands in his large baggy pockets whenever he could. On his nose were large rimmed spectacles with opaque glass, which veiled the clear dark eyes that glowed behind and through them. In his mouth was the inseparable short pipe, with bulbous end and rising cloud of fragrance. He stood with a soldier's posture of attention. His manner showed a strange compound of self confidence and reserve, humor and dryness, carelessness and penetration, mischief and fidelity. He was fond of putting his opinions into the guise of proverbs, fables, or snatches of verse. The more serious or exciting any matter, the more sure was Gerhardt to indulge in these unseasonable fantasies. He was his master's trusted servant, who loved and apprehended his character, but he had ideas of his own that he was accustomed to express with a freedom and pertinacity which some masters would not have brooked.

"Well, Gerhardt," was the Fleming's greeting, "you were prompt and skillful as usual. The men outside will be cold and weary; give them my hearty thanks, and dismiss them to their beds. Come back yourself, and confer as to what is to be done next." Gerhardt came back darkly growling, "'Put no faith in tale-bearers.'"

The four friends drew together, and the Fleming laid his plans before them, which seemed to be opposed by Gerhardt, who said aloud, "'Never trust a broken staff.'"

The Fleming's orders were issued. One of the soldiers was to remain with Gerhardt as hostage for the rest. Will was to change clothes with him, and go with the others to meet Father Christopher at the Palace early in the morning. They were to take the bag of money from the clerk-ale, and to promise more the next day, while they were to get possession of important papers from the room of the Father by a process which Van Diense described.

These arrangements were carried out. Will was disguised, and went away with the other two soldiers. The hostage went with Gerhardt, who, as he linked his nervous arm within that of the soldier, exclaimed, "'Jesting lies make serious sorrow.'"

"A whimsical, cross-grained piece of humor," said the Fleming, "but passing true. What a night we have had!—what a lesson! But, my dear boy, you are quite worn out; you must sleep. There are still some hours before your visit to the Palace."

George eagerly replied, "I am not the least tired. I never spent such a wonderful night. I shall go to the Palace very differently now. I feel a great deal older and wiser than I was this morning. I have thought several times to-night of a saying my father set me to copy, 'Of all crafts, an honest man is the master-craft.'"

"True, my boy," said Van Diense. "God grant that in that school you may live to be a master-craftsman."

CHAPTER V.

GERHARDT'S FOLLY.

> "O Love! what art thou, Love? A wicked thing,
> Making green misses spoil their work at school?
> A melancholy man, cross-gartering?
> Grave ripe-faced wisdom made an April fool?"
> HOOD.

GERHARDT took his hostage in amicable converse to his own modest house at the bottom of the Fleming's garden, seated him by the fire in the neatly furnished room, and offered him a pipe to comfort him for his detention. His sister, a plain Dutch vrau, older than himself,—very silent, very busy, and very suspicious,—looked on with an unfriendly eye.

The two men began to talk, when the sister, looking out of the window, said, "That silly jade is coming to plague you again, Gerhardt. As you say yourself, 'Fair words make fools fain.'"

Gerhardt jumped up to open the door: "What! my pretty mädchen Fanny!" said he: "'Fools will be meddling.'"

"I'm ashamed of you, brother!" said the jealous sister,—"at your years,—and a wise man too!"

"I should know a fair flower from a withered weed," replied Gerhardt. "She brings some message from the governor."

"More like she comes to scoff at us both," said the sister.

The door opened, and Fanny appeared,—to any unprejudiced eye as pretty a little figure as is seldom seen, with dancing step, face full of lively expression, light and capricious as a fairy,—who could never see a man without whetting her edge on him, yet with many arts and pretty fetches to hide her meaning. To Gerhardt's eye she seemed a creature yet more fascinating, as standing on the threshold in the morning sunshine,—gazing at her with undisguised pleasure and welcome,—he said,

> "Here comes my love!—oh, heart, disclose!—
> Lo! she has cheeks that shame the rose,
> And lips that spoil the ruby's praise,
> And eyes that mock the diamond's blaze.
> Here comes my woe!—for free I own—
> Ah, me!—she has a heart of stone!"

"Oh, Master Gerhardt!" cried Fanny, looking modestly down, "I do love your beautiful

verses—you make one blush so; but then you spoil it all: 'a heart of stone,' indeed!—unsay that directly, or I will run away from you."

He looked and sighed, then took her small hand and led her in-doors, saying, "What message do you bring, sweetheart? How is your mistress this morning?"

"I came," answered the blushing girl, "to borrow a milk-jug from your sister, if she will be so good."

The sister fetched the article, and set it near, as much as to say, "Take it, and go your ways."

But Fanny was not ready to go; she had run herself out of breath; her hair was blown about, and wanted parting and smoothing; her apron had slipped awry, and needed putting in its place;—all which orderings she did with due effect. She had her clew of gossip also to unwind. "You may well ask after my poor mistress: those horrid thieves gave her no rest. We must thank you, Master Gerhardt, for your brave protection. It is good to have the strong for your friends,—a strong arm like yours," she said, touching him lightly, and thrilling poor Gerhardt's whole frame. "I hope the wretches are in prison now."

Gerhardt seeing Fanny's eyes glancing at the stranger, said, "'The last suitor wins the maid.' Fanny, you've too many suitors! Who did I see you dancing with at the clerk-ale?"

"Who!" she quickly replied, "why, you, to be sure; but I don't know if I will again,—your step is double Dutch."

"But, Fanny, you danced with ever so many, and with me only once. And I saw you with that Tutor of the Sherwoods, whispering a long while,—a canting rascal! I'll break every bone in his body if he fawns on you. He's bad!"

"That he is," exclaimed the hostage,—"I know him. He lied to us. My girl, take care of his roguery."

Fanny bridled up becomingly: "Deceive me, forsooth! Say what you will, he's a gentleman—though it's little of him I know or care. No! I know some one," looking askance at Gerhardt, "who could toss him across the Wensum, and whose smile and good word is more to me——"

Gerhardt stretched out his strong arms, and held her slim figure, exclaiming, "Say on!—More to you than what?"

"Why, more than his dancing," mischievously answered the sprite; "but, Master Gerhardt, please let me go!"

Gerhardt put her away with some vexation, saying,

> "She makes thee seek, yet fear to find;
> To find, but naught enjoy.
> In many frowns, some passing smiles
> She yields to more annoy.
> She letteth fall some luring baits
> For fools to gather up:
> Now sweet, now sour,—for every taste
> She tempereth her cup."

Such was, in truth, only too real a description of Fanny's manner to her warm but not happy lover. His sister was so unwise as to show plainly her dislike to the girl, and by her taunts she only strengthened the bewitching influence she sought to destroy.

They then talked some while about the events of the night, till Fanny protested she must go, and that "she never forgot the time so as when she looked in at their house. Her mistress always scolded her and warned her about it." On her leaving, the jug proved so heavy that Gerhardt must carry it,—the hostage promising to remain till his return. The two figures were seen by the jealous sister loitering and approaching till they blended as one.

When Gerhardt appeared at home again, he was sighing out his proverbs: "Heigho! 'Make not your sail too large for your ship.' 'Much water goes by the mill that the miller knows not of.' 'I fear! I fear!' 'Light come, light go.' Oh, Gerhardt, Gerhardt! thou'rt a fool for thy pains!"

"A fool indeed!" caught up his sister. "I am ashamed of you, brother: she's fooling you so plainly. 'Every one sees the fire but the blind man.'"

"Aye, master," whispered the hostage, "I side with your sister. That girl is dainty enough, but you'll get no hold of her. She's a siren, or mermaid, that makes sport of brave men's lives and hearts."

Now little Fanny's father was the old keeper of the Cathedral. She was the daughter of a second wife, who was pretty, but sickly, and Fanny inherited some peculiarities of both. The old man had brought her up very strictly, so she would have been sore repressed, but that he was much away at the Cathedral. The mother indulged and enjoyed her daughter's whims and airs, and laughed at the reports she brought home of her conquests and presents. So the girl grew more and more willful, as well as pretty. She was taking her fill of fun after her kind, like a bird or a butterfly, and never thought of harm.

There was, however, one for whom Fanny perhaps cared a little just then. It was only the evening before she had been loitering in a very quiet, shady lane beyond the Close, under pretext of seeing her mother. She had picked a dog-rose, and was plucking off leaf after leaf, and saying, half aloud, "I don't love you! I don't love you!" when she heard a rustling in the hedge, and some one leaped from it, asking, "Which then do you love, you forward girl?"

It was the Alderman's Tutor, in his half-clerical dress, who, throwing off his saintly manner and gravity, addressed her with vivacity equal to her own, and in tones of command rather than in those soft entreaties and flatteries to which she was so accustomed.

"You're a perfect jilt! Why, Will, and Jem, and Michael, and Gerhardt all think you are theirs,—and you are going to throw them all over for your new friend. Of course, you'll deny it, but you'll do it nevertheless."

"I don't know, Master Green," said she; "yours is the newer face, but then I am more afraid of you."

"Nonsense; that's well put on! Why did you promise to meet me here?"

"Nothing of the sort, sir. I never promised, but only said I might walk here. You said you were in Norwich only for awhile, and that you expected to get a higher place, or a good living near London; and—and you wanted a wife; and you said you would tell me something more. But perhaps that was all a joke, sir?"

"No, it wasn't, Fanny,—if I may say so."

"Lawk, sir!—every one calls me so."

"Well, Fanny, I'll tell you. My father is in the Duke of Buckingham's service—the King's favorite, you know;—and I am down here on the Duke's private business. But you must say nothing of all this. I have great offers, and might get a fine Court lady for my wife; but somehow—seeing you here in the country—I like you best of all. Only you must wait a little, till I get to London, and can send or come back for you."

"That sounds right enough," said she, "but when you really come back for me, I shall know what to answer."

"If I go away without any promise," rejoined he, "how do I know but you'll be persuaded by some of your lovers, or find some new ones in my absence?"

"And how should I be sure but you will forget all about me, and never come back?" said the quick-witted girl. "But I do know that Gerhardt would take me openly to a good house and property, and would make me as happy as he knows how."

"Take him, then!" said the young man in a tone of feigned vexation. "He's rather old and queer for a fine girl like you, and you'd have a rough life with his sister. What is he, after all?—a cloth maker's foreman! Take him, and I'll go back to the Court and the Duke." He did not tell her that his father was only a servant in the Duke's kitchen, and that he himself had been educated by the Duke's charity!

"I'm sure I don't want to keep you back from your promotion," said Fanny, half weeping; "nor I don't want to do anything wrong; nor I don't like to give up a fair chance;—but I must go home, sir; I have been away too long."

She had resolution enough to leap up and insist on an immediate farewell.

She fled like a startled fawn, and he looked after her, thinking—"I have her!—Patience only. Marry indeed,—and a priest! Shall I have to take her to London, or leave her behind in imaginary widowhood?"

Fanny hastened to her home with pulses throbbing at the interview she had just had. She found her mother with the usual headache sitting in her invalid chair, but very ready to welcome and listen to her. Just as she was relating her doings to her mother, the door opened, and the gruff old father, Caleb Norman, entered (often called Old Reason Why).

"Now, wife, what think you I have been hearing about our light-headed girl? Why, here she is! God save us! Fanny, what is this I hear of your being seen in the lane walking with a strange gentleman this evening ever so long? Girl! girl! I love your pretty looks, but you'll bring my gray hairs in sorrow to the grave, girl!"

"Father," said Fanny, rising, and coming close to the old man with one of her prettiest smiles, "you take on so about nothing. Sure there's no harm in an evening stroll. Did you not like them once? Why, father, I can take care of myself, and I can any day retire into a snug marriage—with Gerhardt, or somebody."

"Well done, Fanny!" said the mother. "Don't be so hard on her, father. She has a spirit."

"Aye," said the old man, "she talks glibly enough, but she must be more careful, and not get talked about or I'll know *the reason why*."

"Father, I must be going;—I can't stop now for *the reason why;* but I'll mind your advice and be careful."

CHAPTER VI.

"OLD REASON WHY" AND THE CATHEDRAL.

> "And to St. Denis fast we came,
> To see the sights of Notre Dame
> (The man that shows them snuffles),
> Where who is apt for to believe
> May see Our Lady's right-arm sleeve,
> And eke her old pantoffles.
>
> There is one of the cross nails,
> Which whoso sees his bonnet vails,
> And if he will may kneel;
> Some say 'twas false—'twas never so,
> Yet feeling it, thus much I know,
> It is as true as steel."
> CORBET, BISHOP OF NORWICH.

ADJOINING the Cathedral of Norwich, on the north side, is a low, rambling stone mansion, in many styles of architecture, dating as far back as 1318, under Bishop Salmon, its founder. The oldest specimen of the building is to be seen in the noble vaulted kitchen, the finest room in the house, and as purely Norman as the Cathedral. Here the Bishop resides, though the house scarcely deserves the name of palace. Extensive and well-kept gardens and pleasure-grounds, well walled about, surround the house. The fine avenues of lime-trees, the trim lawns and gravel paths, and roads encompassed with ancient houses looking over well-kept gardens, make the Close one of the pleasantest quarters of the old city.

In the gray of the morning our three soldiers presented themselves at the Erpingham Tower, and having the password were admitted through the barred gate. Finding the Palace gate closed, they entered the Cathedral, where the sacristan, old Caleb Norman, was making ready for the early morning service, which our matutinal forefathers enjoyed at six in summer and seven in winter. They walked up and down the glorious Norman nave, certain that Father Christopher, the Bishop's chaplain, would not fail to be at the service. As they strode along, to shake off the damp chill of the place, they were concerting their plans.

"This is a tough job," said one of the soldiers to Will, "which your master has set us—to snatch a saint's picture off the very altar under the eye of the priest while he is giving us absolution."

"At least," replied Will gruffly, "*you* need not complain, for you haven't to do the trick. You can surely feign to be horribly ill with cramps; and the worst to come to you will be a drink of something hot and spicy—no bad thing on such a raw morning. So keep your courage up, and think of the golden nobles to be yours afterwards."

"But what can such as your master want with a saint's picture?"

"He won't worship it, I trow," said Will; "nor is it worth while destroying. How should I know what his whim is?"

"Ah, there's more in it than that," said the soldier; "he spoke of writings. There's something concealed. Good lack! when the talk is of writings, I feel as helpless as a babe. He may have them all for me. Mind you are quick. How shall you wrench it away?—it's screwed or nailed, I'll be bound."

"There's only a spring to touch, and no noise," answered Will. "But you mind, you are not to recover too soon: you must grow worse and worse till I've done it, then *presto*—away as fast as legs can carry us."

Here the sacristan came near, and began to tell his regular stories about its building and history, almost by instinct. The oddity of his address was that with every new subject he forced his corpulent person to duck low, and began thus, "God save you, my masters!" He finished, with a wave of his hand and a solemn

shake of his old head, by repeating this original stanza:

"My masters, we know
God wold have it so;
But the reason why,
That's the mystery."

Hence the old worthy went by the name, among the common folk, of "Old Reason Why." He loved to give his statements an air of contradiction and mystery suited to his peroration; and though it was often ludicrously inapplicable, he never omitted it, nor seemed to notice the sport he afforded. He stuck to facts: "It was so and so;" but he held it an affront to be asked for any explanation, as he held all reasons to be in the mind of God alone. Hence they who liked to tease him were well aware of his weak side.

"God save you, my masters!" he began, ducking very gravely. "This building was founded by the Popish priest Herbert de Lozinga, who, being found guilty of simony, and other black sins——"

"How could a priest be guilty of such sins?" exclaimed one of the soldiers; when the old sacristan, bowing but frowning, answered,

'My masters, we know
God wold have it so;
But the reason why,
That's the mystery.'"

Then he continued the history. "According to the wicked notions of the Papists, he was set to clear himself by erecting this Cathedral at his own expense."

"But," asked the puzzled soldier, "wasn't it a good work to build this Cathedral?"

Once more, the angry old man, bowing, repeated,

"My masters, we know, etc., etc.;"

and then resumed: "This wicked priest was consecrated the first bishop of the Cathedral which his sins founded."

Here Will Barnard could not resist plaguing him with the inquiry, "Why was such a sinner made a bishop?"

The old sacristan, past all patience, said, "God save ye, my masters! I have told you all any one knows, or can know, or has a right to know. Neither the Bishop nor I know any more. Man's first sin was wanting to know good and evil. If this young man can tell us more, I am silent at once; for

'My masters, we know, etc.'"

The old man looked very hard at Will, as if he had some idea who he was. Will felt that any recognition would be very perilous, so he adroitly turned the subject, asking, "Wasn't the Cathedral burnt down?"

The good official, when thus allowed to take the undisputed lead into the region of facts and events, began afresh, "God save you, my masters! The monks and citizens had many quarrels and hard battles in those days for the possession of yonder green, called Tombland, lying between the monastery and the City. One Sunday in 1272, these blind heathenish monks sallied out, and, raging round the City, slew and plundered. Then the City mob forced the doors of the monastery, set the convent on fire, and from the tower of St. George's, Tombland church, flung fiery missiles into the Cathedral nave. The walls stood; but the decorations, books, vestments, and vessels were all destroyed, with much jewelry and treasure. The Prior fled, but soon returned with an army and fell on the City. The King made the citizens rebuild the Cathedral and St. Ethelbert's Gate, as a punishment.

'My masters, we know, etc.'"

There is no saying how long the old man could have discoursed on his favorite themes, if not interrupted.

The hour struck for him to ring the bell and open the great doors. Ere long the people began to answer the deep clang of the bell and to stream in. Presently the twilight procession from the Palace was seen entering the doors. The white vestments, the melodious chant, the waving, flaring lights, and the responding notes of the diffusive organ, added much grace to the scene. The numbers of people hastening to pay their morning devotions gave the dusky old edifice a warm and cheerful aspect, as of smiling dawn chasing away the gloomy night.

The fat person of the Father made him conspicuous in his wonted place, and the keen eye of the Tutor, furtive and cat-like, instantly fell on the soldiers' group. The spokesman gave him a nod, and a flush came over his anxious face as they all passed into the choir.

The service was short. The Tutor beckoned the soldiers to follow him when it was ended. They passed into the Bishop's garden, where, among the thick shrubs, the Tutor slackened his pace and joined them. "Well, my men, what cheer?"

"Good news," replied the leader. "We got in easily, and disturbed none. "We found the iron chest, but nothing was in it save the bag from the clerk-ale: that seems a pretty sum—it is here. There was a strong door, which Maud never told us of, at the stair-head. We left all as we found it, and are to get the rest to-night."

The Tutor looked doubtful and displeased. "This is a sorry tale," he said. "You have earned little or nothing yet. The money will be missed to-day, and talked off."

"Nay, replied the leader, "we left the proper bag filled with stones in its place. We are game to finish the job this night."

"Hand me the money. I will see his Reverence, and learn what he thinks."

"Under your favor," rejoined the soldier, "we will see the Father ourselves, and tell our own tale, and deliver the money. Besides, his Reverence was to give us *the absolution*, without which none of us will stir another step in the matter."

"You canting rogues!" cried the Tutor, "what have you done to need *absolution?* If you had brought the Fleming's head instead of this trifle, you could not be more nice."

"Your Honor, it's what we meant to do, and mean to-night. We can't go on without *the absolution.*"

So the Tutor softened, saying, "I will ask if his Reverence will see you."

He presently returned, and showed them in by a servants' back-door, up several flights of steps, into a very plainly furnished room, where the fat pries: stood in full canonicals. But they had to wait his leisure some time, which we may employ better elsewhere.

That morning had been a busy one to Mistress Van Diense. After the disturbed night, she looked as rosy and fresh as an apple, and as active as the west wind. She bustled Fanny about, and sent her here and there, till the girl said, "Why, Mistress Hannchen, there's a week's work crowded into this morning!"

"Work is often good for body and soul, Fanny. Now go up-stairs to the chambers, and finish there."

Hannchen had had an early visit from Old Reason Why of an unusually important nature about his daughter: she had then been closeted awhile with her brother, and came out with moist eyes, saying, "Philip, there never was so good a man. I never can have a husband, for how shall I find one better or care for one who is worse than you? I will do all I can to guide the girl aright."

Her next step was to send a boy down to ask Gerhardt to step up and speak with her. As she awaited him, she sat down and murmured, "Who would have thought once that I and Philip should have sunk into this bourgeois life,—he half a weaver, and I half a drudge,—match-making between servants and peasants? Philip is wonderful. I wonder if he ever regrets—ever remembers—Arenberg, and Gabrielle, and Brussels! I own I often do. Ah me! Yet I try to be content—oh, my God!—yes, content!"

Gerhardt now entered with many bows. "Fraulein, your most obedient. Perhaps you have some good news for me. I know of old how good you are. 'Hope is a good breakfast, but a bad supper.'"

"This time," she answered, "I think I have some good news. This morning Fanny's eccentric father was here, with many queer expressions about the *reason why*, and the *mystery*, especially in love affairs. He made me understand that he is getting anxious to see his daughter betrothed to a good man,—he prefers you."

"Very good," said Gerhardt; "but the query is whom she prefers."

"He thinks she really does prefer you, but there is some fresh acquaintance who tells her stories, and comes from London,—so his wife tells him."

"Aye," said Gerhardt, "'New lights often come through cracks in the roof.' Your brother knows the Sherwoods' Tutor; he is a bad, designing man. I have my eye on him. Let him offend Fanny——"

"But," said Hannchen, "the danger is not of his offending, but of his pleasing her. Her father asked me to say to you that he feels growing old, and his wife can't live very long. If they were taken, what would become of Fanny? He could leave her a little, and we would not let her want. But he prays you to urge her, and marry her quickly."

"I wish nothing better, lady. All I have should be hers readily. But 'Lucky men want little counsel.' I fear I am not lucky in this. And what could I do with my sister?—They wouldn't sort,—'An old patch on a new garment.'"

"Gerhardt, I have spoken to my brother, and he takes great interest in your welfare. He says, let your sister come to us as housekeeper: we should agree well, and she would be near enough to you. Then he would give Fanny a handsome dower, and you a horse and chaise on the marriage, which would please her. Now, do you talk to her presently when she comes down. Tell her that she shall have plenty of good dresses,—I'll see to that. Win her, and make her safe, for I believe she is good in the main, and she will grow to be as you wish her."

"Mistress Hannchen, how am I to thank you and your brother for this help in my despair? But yet 'Every couple is not a pair.' I could never get any promise: 'Catch your bear before you sell his skin.'"

"Gerhardt, I shall reply to you in your own way, 'Faint heart never won fair lady.' But I hear her coming; I will go away. Only make her fix a time."

So Gerhardt awaited the skip of the light foot, and the face that smiled on his dreams, and the pink hand that eluded his grasp. "Why, Fanny," said he, as she came in rather weary and distrait, "here has your mistress sent for me, but is obliged to go away. You look ill at ease, my girl; I wish I could make you happy. I would give all I have for a smile and a *yes* this morning. 'If wishes were horses, beggers would ride.'"

"Master Gerhardt," said Fanny, brightening a little, and standing near him as he sat, "I will give you as many smiles and yeses as you like, if you will only ask nice questions instead of those dry proverbs which you poke at one."

"I will forget the proverbs, and ask the questions. Shall I begin with the serious or the light—with love or pretty dresses?"

"Oh, the dresses to be sure! I'll be sure to smile and say 'Yes.'"

"What, Fanny, and not for love at all?"

"Why, for both, perhaps," replied she.

"What do you say, Fanny, to the pretty wedding dresses?"

"Ah," said she, shamming innocence, "is my mistress going to be married?"

"Not she," said Gerhardt, seizing her hand, "but we."

"Oh, that's another matter," said Fanny. "I'm so young."

"But, Fanny, I can take care of you?"

"Then," said Fanny, "your sister and I would never agree."

"But my master offers to take my sister as his housekeeper; so the house would be all ours, Fanny."

"La!—how very good!" said she, with eyes wide open.

"Then," added Gerhardt, with an air of triumph, "Master Van Diense also will give you a good dower for yourself, and a horse and chaise at the wedding; and Mistress Hannchen will supply you with pretty dresses."

"Bless me!—I long to look at them, and feel them, and try them on. And I shall have all that for marrying you?"

Gerhardt hardly looked flattered with that unlucky turn, but said, "Besides, I give you a house, and a pretty good fortune, which is growing yearly, and all my heart with it, which has long been yours. Will you give me yours in return, dear Fanny?"

"Let me see! You are a very good man, and I like you,—and house, and carriage, and dower, and dresses! Shall I marry? I don't think I can. I wish my mother were here. What would she say?"

"She wishes it, Fanny. Your father was here to-day, and said they both wished you well settled, and they preferred me, which is great honor. Dearest Fanny, do consent! 'If things were to be done twice, all would be wise.' But you can only choose once, so be mine within a month."

"A month, indeed! How could the things be ready?"

"Then two months, or three, or I could wait even more."

"Oh, dear me—dear me! what am I to do!"

whimsically cried the girl; then kneeling before him, she said, "Would you like it?—would you be good to me?—would you never quarrel, but give me my way?—would you never be jealous or disagreeable?—and would you give your young wife plenty of pleasure, and promise that your sister shall not come back?"

Gerhardt was sore of heart for this odd selfish questioning, and hardly thinking of the future, he promised; and then so also did she, with pretty confusion.

"Within six months or three?" said he, almost confounded by his success.

"Six, to be sure, you greedy man!"

Fanny skipped up-stairs laughing, and saying to herself, "Mercy on me! What will the other say? Six months! Ah! there's many a slip."

To her mistress she said, with a simple air, "Would you think it, madam? I don't know what came over me; but Master Gerhardt promised so fair, and pressed so hard, that I guess I am not my own any more."

"I wish you well with all my heart, Fanny. When is it to be?"

"Not for six months."

"Foolish girl!—make it one month."

"Please, madam, no; the dresses would never be ready, and I'm so young and simple. And, oh, mistress, what will you ever do here with his cross old sister?"

"Fanny, she is *his* sister, and you must learn to love her."

"That's as she loves me, madam."

So Gerhardt and Fanny were at last betrothed. But, oh, 'the wooing o't—the wooing o't!'

CHAPTER VII.

FATHER CHRISTOPHER AND THE ABSOLUTION.

"'Wills't du mir jedes Jahr viere Schafe geben?' sagte der Wolf zu dem Schäfer. 'So bin ich zufrieden und du kannst sicher schlafen.' Der Schäfer schuitete spottisch den Kopf.

"'Drei—Zwei?'

"'Nicht ein einziges. Es wäre wohl thoricht wenn ich mich einem Feinde zinsbar mächte vor welchem ich mich durch meine Wachsamkeit sichern kann.'"

LESSING.

It may be needful to account for the presence of a personage like the Roman Catholic priest already introduced as a resident in the palace of a Protestant bishop. The period was one of reaction from the Reformation, and of return to the Church of Rome. The marriage of Charles the First to the Catholic Henrietta, who came with high hopes of proselyting the nation and her husband, and with a strong body of Romish ecclesiastics in her train, greatly encouraged these ideas. Archbishop Laud, and some of the prelates, opened private communications with Rome, received Jesuit messengers and advisers from the Holy See, and in concert with them sought to assimilate the Churches and to crush the Puritans. Our fat priest was one of these go-betweens. Secrecy was observed about his real character, and the popular party could very rarely detect any legal proof of connection with Rome. Meantime, the Reverend Christopher Bennett was the Bishop's chaplain at ordinations and confirmations; but in private it was said that great lords and ladies, and even Bishop Wren himself, knelt, confessed, and found absolution from Father Christopher. Under him were a body of spies and servants, whose object was to find money, anywhere and anyhow, for the exigencies of the Court, and to propagate—also anyhow—the Catholic faith, especially among the young.

The individual whose introduction we have thus made was turning to speak to the soldiers when an opposite door opened, and a small, meager man, in rich morning dress, appeared. His face was pale and displeasing, having, as well as his forehead, that long and narrow shape which one connects with narrow-mindedness and hard prejudice. The new-comer bustled in, but seeing strangers, quickly said, "Ah, Father, engaged!—Can I see you for a few minutes?"

"Surely, my lord," was the reply; "I am ever the servant of my Master's servant."

The two ecclesiastics withdrew to a richly furnished chamber, at one end of which were a chapel and altar, provided, after the Romish manner, with the receptacle of the mass, pictures of saints and the Madonna, and surmounted by an ivory crucifix. Candles were burning before the altar. The other end of the room was like an ordinary sitting-room, with fire and chairs. The Father touched a spring near the door, and a screen came down, dividing the room into two, and hiding the altar. On the visible side of this screen was painted with much taste Venus receiving the apple of beauty from Paris, with Cupid at her knee. On the other side was a fine picture of the Virgin Mother receiving the homage of the shepherds to her babe. A singular symbol was that screen of a system two-sided, blending with the slightest division the earthly and spiritual, the Pagan and Christian, the sensual and the holy, and presenting the one side or the other according to purpose and interest.

Having seated themselves, after a moment's pause, the Father opened the conversation with "I fear your lordship is troubled. If my poor judgment may avail, by our Lady's grace, what——"

"Father," was the brisk reply, "I know your skill, and you know my zeal, in drawing together our two Churches, that should never have been severed But men's tempers are stubborn. The more power we use, the greater our difficulties. I have filled the prisons—forced thousands into exile; have scrupled at nothing, however cruel, to support Laud; and spent hundreds in redecorating churches, and this Cathedral; but it is all Tantalus work. Money is still wanted; Puritans and rebels increase; the people gain, and the Court yields; the Pope sends nothing but promises; rascals break my stained glass, and deface my statues; and now Bishop Andrews dies, and leaves a host of good things—deanery of Westminster, and bishopric of Chichester; and my friend Laud forgets to promote his right hand."

The Father judged it best to touch first on the less personal matters of this angry complaint; and said, changing his tone for one of benign superiority, "My son, how often must I remind thee of the hydra whose heads cannot be cut off singly, but smote in a vital part?"

"All that I know well," replied the impatient Bishop. "You have said so before; but how to kill this snake?—that is the point."

"My lord," said the Father more gently, "the holy word of God warns us against 'blind guides,' now if one blind the guide, how shall he find the way? Some evil has chanced that you tell me not. What can I say till I know it?"

"Well, have it then. Laud writes—something sourly—that he waits mainly for these accursed moneys; that a book has come out in this diocese by Doctor Yates, in answer to Montague's *Apollo Cæsarem*—a pestilent clever book, which you, Father, should have scotched; and that the Court, dreading this new Parliament, think of giving up Montague as a Jonah; and even Laud may have to give way to old Puritan Abbot. And where shall we all be then? England would be too hot for *you*, and I should have seen my last step of promotion."

"And is that all?" said the Father, like one resolved to let the tempest pour out the last drop before he interposed. "Is that really all? I believe I can promise the moneys to-morrow. Your lordship allowed Yates to go to London against my advice. What have we to do to defend Montague? His opinions are afloat—let him sink: the Church needs its Jonahs, and let the whale devour him. If Laud foresees a storm, he also sees the Lord standing by to dissipate it. Is this all?"

"Father," answered the chafed prelate, "in Gospel words, 'I have patience with you, and I will pay you all.' Laud hints at the cause wherefore he has passed me over in appointing a new Dean of Westminster. Canst guess what it is?" he exclaimed, as he fixed his twinkling beady eyes on the sleek, unalterable face of the Father. "None but yourself knew what he hints. How could he learn that I had been bargaining with Rome on my own account? If you have been false to me, Father, I will find some revenge."

"My son, by what oath shall I swear?" was the reply. At which the Bishop broke into a contemptuous laugh.

"Oath!—what oath will hold you? Tell me facts, not oaths. See, here Laud writes: 'I should have rejoiced to have brought my invaluable right hand to Westminster, only I hear that your lordship is looking higher, and is seeking purple and fine linen from beyond-seas.' How could he learn that? Who but you tempted me to supplant him, and all but offered me the cardinal's hat and legateship if I would close with Rome's conditions? Should I betray myself?"

"My son," replied the Father, "your suspicions are not unreasonable. My offers hold good even now. I have not divulged them. Is there no other person? Your lordship is very free with my young coadjutor and may have dropped hints. I believe his correspondence leaks. Depend on it, that wary, subtle arch-heretic Van Diense is at the bottom of this. Folk say he has Bacon's head: he has more—he has money, and he spares nothing for intelligence. He has a private express, by royal license, twice a week on business. He communicates with the Puritans, but also with the Court, and has interviews with the Queen and the favorite. Even Laud admits him, and the Dutch ambassador is his fast friend. His weavers here rally round him as if he were a lord. He is very able and secret, and is never caught slipping. His cant of piety and Dutch freethinking draw to him the religious people, for whom he pays their fines and prints their works abroad. This is the upas tree which must be rooted up. My lord, trust not that Tutor too far. He is true to us, but State secrets are not for beardless youths."

The Bishop heard all this with impatience, and then shortly answered, "I may have given hints—the youth suits me. Let Laud know the worst. It may be well for him to fear a rival. Meantime I hate this Fleming as you do. What plan have you to disarm or overcome him?"

"My son," said the Father, relapsing into his unctuous gravity, "the Lord will provide a lamb or a ram for a burnt offering. Already, I believe, his treasure and papers are in our grasp. It is high time, for he is going to London to-morrow with Alderman Sherwood. Something may chance on the road. He must have many doubles to escape the hunt we will give him."

The quick Bishop exclaimed, "Oh, that reminds me of the coming of that fiery spark the Alderman's son, to make some apology to Stephen. If he does not show proper penitence, woe betide him. We can prevent their going to town, or provoke the youth to show contempt of our Court. Farewell for a time. I will go and see what turns up in my walk, and you will work your subterranean way."

"Vale, benedicite, mi fili. I will be with you ere long," said the Father, who paced the room with folded arms for a moment, and then, changing his mien, burst into soft chuckling laughter. "Truly, 'tis my turn to laugh. He, too—cardinal and legate—rival Laud, and browbeat me, lead the Catholic cause in this land—a weathercock, a changeling! How would Laud laugh, and my good brethren at Rome, at the barbaric obtuseness, the silly candor and testy fickleness, which characterize Protestants! There is an adaptiveness—a liberality and self-sacrifice—in the Catholic character (whether or not it be connected with the old fables of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Virgin and Child, crucified God, or transmuted food, I know not nor care); but there I see the path to influence and greatness. This Fleming is the only Protestant I know who has the continental breadth, subtle shrewdness, fertile resource, and freedom from embarrassing passions, so needful to success. But shall a Jesuit Father, trained from youth in the most esoteric lore of the body, yield to a Dutch wool-stapler? I trow not. But hush!—walls may have ears. Now for these ruffians and their paltry doings—small, foul links in so grand a chain; but"—opening the door and calling to the Tutor—"the wisdom of God uses an old nail to slay His enemies, and the jaw-bone of an ass His high behests."

The Tutor entered with his three satellites, looking weary and anxious.

"Children," the Father saluted them, "you have committed trespass, and you fear fresh temptation. I have heard it all, and am ready to give you my *blessing*. But first deposit here the bag I have been told of. Now kneel, all of you."

"Here he was about to pronounce a few words, and cut short the interview, when the first soldier exclaimed, "Nay, holy Father, but *the absolution.*"

"You shall have that to-morrow," replied the priest, "when you have succeeded."

"But suppose we are killed,—we die in our sins. Pray, holy Father, deny us not."

"Well, if it must be," replied the Father slowly. "God forbid I should discourage you, my children."

He touched the spring, and up rose the screen, showing the chapel, altar, and lights beyond. The priest went to the altar; the Tutor began to swing the incense and to act as assistant; the

soldiers knelt on the floor at a small distance. Will placed himself opposite the picture, which he at once recognized. After some prayers and responses, the Father turned to repeat the absolution in due form, when one of the men fell flat on the floor, groaning, screaming, and foaming at the mouth. The others surrounded him. The priest and Tutor broke off the service and drew near. The man seemed to become weaker, and to be sinking away.

"Some brandy," cried Will, "for his life!"

"Nay, my son, not you,—rest here. You know not my cabinets, I ween." The Tutor left the room for the brandy. The Father turned to seek a goblet. At that moment Will slipped softly to the altar, touched a knob over the picture, which inclined forward, showing in a recess behind it a small packet of parchment. This he removed, and hid in his sleeve. As gently as possible he closed the spring, and was retiring, when the Tutor suddenly appear-with the flask.

Their eyes met—suspicion in one, surprise in the other.

"What seek you there?" said the Tutor.

The priest also rapidly faced round. It was a critical moment. All eyes were on Will. Another moment, and the true idea had flashed on the priest's mind. But Will merely walked beyond the altar, picked up a cushion from the floor, calmly brought it and laid it under the sick man's head, and said, "The floor is a hard pillow." Both Tutor and priest glanced at the altar and at each other; but seeing nothing disturbed, and Will calmly busied about his sick companion, their suspicions were quieted.

After swallowing some brandy, the man slowly recovered. The priest returned to the altar, and finished the service; he then dismissed the company with "Pax vobiscum."

The Tutor detained the soldiers, saying, "Two of you I know as true men; but who is this third whom I have not seen? Can you answer for him?" The soldiers declared him to be their true comrade.

"Then," said the Tutor, "let him take the oath of fidelity which you have sworn to, and I shall trust him."

A shade fell on Will's face; this was more than conscience could bear; but he soon recovered, and said "he didn't mind what oaths he took under a roof, for they went no further than the walls."

The Tutor, not wondering at such a superstition in a man of his supposed character, said, "Follow me, then, outside."

Beyond the door he paused, and took out his missal, saying, "Repeat after me, and kiss this holy book."

Will looked right and left, but there seemed no escape.

"I swear——" said the Tutor.

"I swear——" repeated Will.

"To be true and faithful in this matter," continued the one, and the other repeated; "and to obtain for my employers,"—which also Will slowly uttered—"the treasures and papers of——"

The Tutor was proceeding, when Will broke in with "This is not open air; these hedges and trees are like walls and roof. I won't deceive you,—we must move further on."

"You are particular, my man," was the Tutor's response.

So they advanced till they were in sight of the great entrance gate, and were on a lawn. The Tutor asked, "Is this open enough? Can God hear you here?"

Just then, however, two persons entered the gate whom Will rejoiced to recognize as the Alderman and George, with several attendants. The Tutor was also aware of their approach, and hastened the ceremony. "I swear——"

"I swear——" repeated Will, who now had recourse to every possible objection and interruption to give time for help to arrive.

"Fellow, bring these jests to an end," cried the Tutor, "for I like them not. Repeat the words directly, or it shall be worse for you."

At this moment George, who quite comprehended the scene, came up to the Tutor—not noticing Will,—shook hands,—led him to his father, mixed him with their party, and stood in his way, so engaging and besetting him that when he looked round for the soldiers, to his mortification they were gone. His face grew blacker as George observed, "I am glad those cut-throat ruffians are gone. Did I not see you speaking to them at the clerk-ale? Beware of trusting to such wretches!"

CHAPTER VIII.

GEORGE BEFORE THE BISHOP.

"I saw young Harry with his beaver on,
His cuisses on his thigh, gallantly armed,
Rise from the ground like feathered Mercury,
And vaulted with such ease into his seat
As if an angel dropt down from the clouds
To turn and wind a fiery Pegasus,
And witch the world with horsemanship."

SHAKSPEARE.

WHEN the Tutor found that the soldiers had got clear away, he returned in much discomposure to take his part in the meeting of George and the Bishop, in which he wished to infuse as much mischief as possible. Approaching his pupil, he said, "George, you seem to be in high spirits this morning, though you are here to repent your great rudeness to Stephen Wren. What apology have you to offer?"

"Only," answered George, "the old one of the lamb to the wolf—he could not have disturbed his water, since he drank higher up. But there will be no fuss about the matter. He was worse to me than I to him."

"Do not expect to get off so easily, George. You will have to go on your knees and beg for mercy. Take all on yourself, and perhaps you may escape with a slight flogging."

This nettled George, as it was intended to do; and he replied hotly, "I advise them not to touch me, or——" And then pausing, and with an effort at self-control, he continued, "Pshaw! these things are soon arranged between gentlemen. I will not disgrace my father's son."

The Tutor stared in wonder at this new mood.

After a brief interval they were ushered into a room of state, where they found the little fussy Bishop in his robes, elevated on a grand chair, under a rich canopy, with some of his clergy around him, bearing his crozier, Bible, miter, and other insignia. His son Stephen stood below, with his plain features disfigured by his sulky and proud spirit. The fat Father, whose keen eye comprehended the whole scene, stood near, ready to make it worse if possible. The clear object of the well-got-up scene was to hold a "bed of justice" on poor George, and to humiliate the Alderman through his son.

Very stiff were the salutations exchanged between the canonical and civic authorities, never very cordial. "Master Alderman, to what do I owe the great honor of a visit?"

"Your Reverence, my good lord Bishop, thanks for your gracious reception to your poor servant."

"Alderman Sherwood, I am sorry to be compelled thus early to complain, and, alas! of your own son," began the Bishop,—when, to the amazement of all, George came from behind his father into the center. Approaching his young antagonist, he forthwith offered his hand, saying, "Master Stephen, I hope you were not hurt yesterday. I am sorry we fell out. I dare say I mistook your meaning in the noise and scuffle. Will you shake hands and make it up?"

There was a general murmur of admiration in the assembly. A thunderbolt could not have more utterly confounded the malicious clerical party. The surly boy, however, did not move, but looked for instructions to his father and the chaplain, who had evidently practiced him in a different part from this.

George drew back a little, saying, "I am sorry if you bear a grudge. I am quite ready to make peace."

Here the chaplain interfered with bland manner, seeking to recover the superiority which George had assumed. "Under his lordship's favor, I venture to think that the young lad has hardly met the case. I witnessed the whole, and saw no provocation offered."

Here George broke out for a moment, and cried, "No provocation!" in a loud, indignant tone, his eyes flashing fire, till remembering the Fleming's caution against going into causes, he was as suddenly silent.

"I repeat—no provocation!" continued the Father very quietly, "but the furious passion and violence of that young man—who has given us just now a specimen of his spirit—I cannot describe. He ridiculed the handsome bow with which Stephen shot at the archery; he only allowed him an inferior prize which he could not accept; at the dance, he and his companions treated your son with insolence and assault, and threatened to assault him where even your lordship could not protect him. Such rudeness requires an ampler apology, or a more severe chastisement."

Here the uncouth Stephen, recovering his courage, foolishly exclaimed, "You know you struck me first, and called me names. What if my bow was covered with silver and ribbons? Had I not a right to ask a girl to dance with me?—and why did you force her to refuse me? You set on me, and I might have given you more than you liked, only we were separated."

George evidently had to swallow once or twice as if the right words would not come; but at length recovering his frankness, he answered, "My, lord, I cannot deny that I was in a passion—all that passed I do not remember. I beat your son in the shooting, and the girl chose to dance with me; that led to some scuffling, which did no one any harm, as you may see. Surely your lordship cannot be hard on a boy's tussel on a maypole green; but as for any words of disrespect to your lordship, that I deny: there is a great difference between a father and a son." There was some tittering at this home-thrust, and even the Bishop did not seem to take it amiss. "As to Master Stephen, if I say I was wrong to get into a passion, what can any one do more?"

The Bishop saw it would be dangerous to press the matter further, and no one could help admiring the adroitness with which so young a pilot steered clear of dangers which might have baffled an experienced courtier. "Come, Stephen," said he, "you were wronged; but due apology is made. You, too, were hot, I dare say, and not backward in fight. We must not let the Alderman think that ecclesiastics are revengeful. Enough has been said,—shake hands and make friends."

The boy stared, turned round loutishly, without looking at George, and held out his hand, muttering, "For all this, I won't forget you."

"No," said George, courteously wringing his hand, "fights often make friends. I shall be happy to improve the honor of your acquaintance."

"Will it please you, Master Alderman," said the Bishop, "to take some refection with us?"

The Alderman pleaded public business as his excuse for declining. The Bishop shook hands with him and with George, asking the latter to come and spend a day with his son. The Alderman mentioned his purpose of taking his boys to the Westminster School on the morrow. The Bishop highly praised this step, and eulogized his good friend the Principal.

"Ah, I should not wonder," said his lordship, "if yonder clever springald was a bit of a rebel at home. My Stephen is but too obedient and gentle. Perhaps they will be schoolmates. Commend me to Osbaldeston, the Principal,—we called him Square-toes at school, and I was Wedge. How time flies, and makes us old fellows beside our boys!"

When the father and son were alone in their carriage, the Alderman laid his hand fondly on the boy's shoulder, and said, "My dear boy, where gottest thou thy fair temper and bold words to-day? The Fleming could not have managed better."

George replied, with his eyes full of tears, "Father, it was all owing to him. I only took his advice."

"My son, I am right glad to hear it, for his wisdom and piety have made another man of thy father."

"I keep thinking," said George, now fairly sobbing, "whatever I shall do without him,—and you too, father, and mother and Alice,—when Edward and I shall be alone at school."

"George," replied his father gravely, "has not Van Diense told thee Who it is he trusts, and Who has made him what he is?"

"Ah, father, yes!—to hear him read the Bible and pray, you would think he was a real priest, and"—in lower voice—"better than some we have just seen."

"True, George; and at school these helps will be with you as much as at home. When the Fleming and I are away, God will still be near, and will bless you, dear boy, everywhere and always. You believe this, my son?"

"Sometimes I do, father; and then all goes right, as this morning; but more frequently I forget when I should remember."

When George quitted his father, he hastened across the Castle Hill to the Fleming's, to relate to him what had happened, and to thank him for his counsel. Edward and Alice went with him, and he made them laugh merrily over Stephen Wren's defeat and sour looks.

"Did you not tell of his refusing the prize?" said Edward.

"And of his saying I *must* dance—rough fellow!" added Alice; inquiring also, "How did the Tutor look, and the fat Priest?"

"Like a dog when you snatch his bone from him," replied George.

"But I am afraid, when you are at school," said Alice, with trembling voice, "he will revenge himself, and set the boys against you, George. Oh, Edward, mind you stand by each other, and let nothing sever you! Let us hold hands and promise to keep together till we three meet again," said the young peacemaker.

They put their hands in hers, and promised; and then the boys fell to fighting in fun; and next, taking the girl between them, they ran merrily to Castle Meadow. Opening the back-door, they burst into the kitchen, and surprised Gerhardt with Fanny seated bird-like on his knee, looking at some ribbons and pecking at some sweets he had brought for her, while he held his strong arms round her, and with a great content in his face was saying,

"Happy is the wooing which is not long a-doing."

The young folk paused at the door while George, laughing, said, "Heyday!—don't let us disturb you. Is Master Van Diense at home?"

"No, young master," said Fanny, "nor Mistress Hannchen."

Gerhardt let his captive down, but held her hand as she stood by him.

Alice ran up to Fanny, and said, "So you will be Mistress Gerhardt, as Ann told me long ago; and she said you would get a better man than you deserve."

Now Fanny had been in her best mood all the morning, through the kindness of her mistress; and she had by her graciousness made Gerhardt intensely happy. She felt, too, a sort of liking for Gerhardt come over her. So she looked very modest, and replied, "He is very good to me,—better than I have been to him, Mistress Alice. I shall not be a servant any more, but have lady's dresses, and a carriage, and a beautiful house."

"Very nice for you, Fanny," said George. "And what are you to give Gerhardt?"

"Why, herself!" cried Edward;—"is not that enough? We are both quite content with Alice herself."

"Then," put in Gerhardt, "Alice will have her 'bread buttered on both sides.'"

Thus speaking, the children all ran off, and left the lovers to their private intercourse. Nor was any coldness produced by this fun. Gerhardt coaxed his bird to her perch again, and she began to chatter and question afresh. The sun shone into the kitchen, gleaming from bright covers and plates, and all was quiet save the slow-ticking clock, and the happy pur of the tortoise-shell cat stretched before the hearth. Suddenly Gerhardt gently said,

"There is a garden in her face, where roses and white lilies glow;
There is a heavenly Paradise wherein all pleasant fruits do grow:
There cherries hang that none may buy, till Cherry-ripe themselves do cry.

These cherries fairly do inclose of Orient pearls a double row,
Which when her lovely laughter shows, they look like rosebuds filled with snow;
Yet them no peer or prince may buy, till Cherry-ripe themselves do cry."

"Very pretty!" said Fanny; "but I haven't said 'Cherry-ripe,' and you are to obey me in all things."

"Fanny, I fear I have rivals. Tell me, is there not a new one—quite a stranger? See! 'Talk of the devil, and he will appear.'"

Here he pointed to the window, from which, crossing the hill, could be seen the slim figure of the Tutor himself.

Fanny looked out, and laughed, saying, "Very odd!—I know the young fellow: he has offered to take me to London, where his friends are with the great Duke. But that's all over, and you see what I give up for your sake, Gerhardt."

"You're sure, Fanny, you have given him up?—for though you are more than my life, I could not share you with another. 'It's well to be off with the old love before you are on with the new.' You must throw him over, once and forever. I don't believe his grand stories of London; but if I see him walking with you now you are mine, let him beware, for I won't spare him, nor lightly forgive you."

"You savage old Bluebeard!" said Fanny, rather delighted at this proof of her influence, "would you beat him black and blue, or grind his bones to make your bread? Well, but he is going away directly to London."

"I am right glad to hear it; and I know," said Gerhardt, "'The hasty man must wait while his beer is drawing.' But, Fanny, don't let him get speech of you before he goes. I'll be patient while he is here, if he leaves you alone; but 'The last drop makes the cup run over,' and a farewell may be that last drop. Say you will not see him again!"

Fanny started, and looked pale, and a little angry, and then replied, "Bluebeard, I'm not yours yet, you know. I must be civil to people if I meet them. If I saw this man, I should only tell him I am yours, and cannot be his. Would that be wrong, dear old Bluebeard?" she said softly, while she laid her head on his shoulder, and looked up in his face.

CHAPTER IX.

FAREWELLS AT THE MAID'S HEAD INN.

"Injurious time now with a robber's haste
Crams his rich thievery up he knows not how:
As many farewells as be stars in heaven,
With distinct breath and consigned kisses to them,
He fumbles up into a loose adieu,
And scants us with a single famished kiss,
Distasted with the salt of broken tears."

SHAKSPEARE.

ON a bright spring morning soon after sunrise, the inner square of the Maid's Head Inn, in Wensum Street, then the chief hostelry in the good old city, was the scene of considerable hurry and confusion: pack-horses were being laden with merchandise; stout serving-men were looking to their sharp swords and strong saddles, for the escort of the party of Alderman Sherwood and the Fleming; ostlers were swearing and grooming; and hurrying chamber-maids, always alive to any stir, were looking down from the upper widows.

The party of travelers were partaking of a substantial breakfast of meat, bread, and ale, before setting out on the long and dreaded journey, which would consume the best part of the week, if no accident or assault should lay them upon the road with broken limbs or head. Within the bar, where a warm fire blazed, was the Alderman, twice as portly as usual from the furs and mufflers in which he was wrapped. There were his two bonnie lads, with glistening eyes and excited manner, showing the glee of youth in change, enterprise, and a first entry on the world.

The Tutor stood aloof in a corner, evidently angered and baffled, for he was not to be of the party, as he had hoped. His wish to leave Norwich at once arose from events which had transpired that night. Norwich would be too hot for him; and he had come accoutered for the journey to attend his young pupils to London. The good-natured Alderman had made no opposition, but when the Fleming arrived he quietly said, "My friend, I had purposed to be tutor to these boys on this journey, and I thought you promised me that office. Besides, to journey with one priest is as unlucky as with one crow; and then I have had dreams of a priest's cassock setting light to the bed of the inn where we shall sleep. In short, I believe your Tutor" (looking at him hard) "had better stay here and eschew the snares of the world, the flesh, and the devil."

No persuasions could move Van Diense; and the Alderman, lest he should lose the Fleming's invaluable company, bade the Tutor return to the Bishop's chaplain till he could go to London in some other way. And it was well he did.

Another sort of priest was also there to see his friends start—the worthy Rector Bridge,—who, though somewhat scandalized at the Fleming's rudeness to the cloth, yet held his peace. With him came his fair daughter Alice, with downcast face, and eyes moist with tears all ready to flow at the thought of losing her beloved playfellows and boy-lovers. Ann stood behind, little less sad than her young mistress, for her devoted swain was to be one of the travelers. Then the trim and elegant figure of the Fleming's sister, fondly flitting about her brother, of whom she was so proud, and who was earnestly committing her to the care of his faithful Gerhardt in his absence. Gerhardt was preoccupied in watching the movements of his pret y, fairy-like Fanny, who had brought some of her master's parcels, and was already returning home. Gerhardt also saw the Tutor, and keenly watched his movements, vainly hoping to prevent all communication.

The Alderman was some time in earnest colloquy with the clergyman and the Fleming respecting George's conduct on the previous day, which he attributed to the Fleming's advice, who, however, replied, "Nugœ, the boy is a fine boy—good soil for good seed: hope he won't be spoiled by your Westminster training—half monastery, half soldiers' barrack—half bastinado, half glutton,—good for the animal, but evil for the Christian or the gentleman. Cavalier, forsooth—a model fashioned in the devil's workshop!"

The Rector alluded to the burglary, and asked if he was not afraid to leave home.

"Oh," smiled the Fleming, "the knaves were worst off;—my house is a trap, and my people are trustworthy. The rogues had to do my work in such sort that I carry to town proofs of abominable treason in high quarters."

"What, in the Church, no doubt!" said the Alderman.

"In the State, more likely!" rejoined his friend.

"In both," replied the Fleming. "I trust, friend Sherwood, your servants' courage is as firm as their blades, for I have about me what may well prompt to some assault. To be sure, I have put them on a wrong scent; and I sent a message to you overnight not to share my perils with your lads."

"Aye, you did," answered his friend; "but I am ready to share both your peril and protection; and the latter I have ever found the stronger of the two."

"Rector, what think you," said Van Diense, "of commissions from the Pope to dignitaries in your Church offering to create them cardinals and nuncios?"

"Never!" gasped the clergyman.

"Now in my possession," replied the Fleming.

"Forgeries — forgeries!" said the indignant Churchman.

"We shall see that in London," answered Van Diense, "for I will make rare use of them there."

"Beware how you increase the feuds and jealousies of our unhappy but true Church!" said the parson, "for you are a——"

"A heretic, you would say, my friend."

"Nay, not so," said Bridge, "for I know you to be as sound a Christian as myself;—only you cannot understand our English institutions."

This conversation was interrupted by the blowing of a horn to show that preparations were ready for the start. Now jests and laughter sank into quiet smiles and whispered talk. The deepest sorrow seemed to reign with those who remained, who were disappointed that their grief was hardly shared by those before whom was the excitement of the journey.

"Here, Will," said his faithful spinster, "is a woolen wrapper I might give you, only you seem too merry about leaving ever to feel cold."

"Ah," said George, ever ready to tease, "and who did I see last evensongtide knitting so fast, and sighing out at every stitch, 'Poor Will! poor Will!'"

"Nonsense, Master George;—you were too busy at bob cherry with Mistress Alice to care for anything else."

Will came forward to receive his gift, and have it folded round his neck, and to exchange suitable farewells.

Alice was left a moment with the two chief friends of her childish days, and whom she was now going to lose. They were both held in check by each other, and by boyish undemonstrativeness.

"Now, Alie dear, what shall we get in London for you?" asked George.

"I don't want you to go to London," sobbed the little maid, "unless I may ride behind, as I did when we rode Robin to Cossey."

"I should like you to go with us," said Edward.

"But it's no use wishing," replied practical George, "for you ride behind father, and I behind the Fleming. And here come the horses. There is the high-stepping iron-gray;—the Fleming beckons. Alie dear, farewell," (hastily kissing her); "bless you! and don't be dead or ill before we come back."

Edward, seeing that this abrupt farewell had quite taken poor Alice aback, staid a moment to comfort her.

"George is mad to see London," he explained;—"we shall be yet happier to come back."

"But—but"—cried Alice, "he needn't be so happy when I am so sorry!" and she burst into a piteous wail of distress which made him come to her, and touched all present.

They mounted—the stirrup-cup was drained—farewells and blessings were exchanged. The

Alderman led the way under the arched gate, with Edward on his horse sadly watching his playmate's agony. The Fleming was following, when one of the soldiers of the former night stepped through the arch, and held his bridle. George stood impatiently, and ready to mount, but this man was on the mounting-stone, whispering what arrested the Fleming's close attention, who was heard muttering—"Ah!—thanks—good fellow!—by the other gate you say?—just started?—thanks!"

The weeping Alice was led past on her way home, when George ran to her, and kissed her tears away, saying, "Alie, woman, don't fret! —men must go into the world; but we will make fortunes, and come back with titles and estates, and bring them all to you; and we shall laugh at the idea of your crying when we went. We will often talk of our little playfellow. Will shall bring back a letter full of forget-me-nots; and for Ann," he said, turning to the good servant, "a ring and wedding-cake."

Tears changed to half-hysteric laughter; and as George mounted, and bowed his last adieus, the laughter irresistible was like those who part for a day rather than for—well-a-day! who knows how long? They stood awhile and watched the long train of horse-riders till they could hardly distinguish the vanishing figures; then they could only see their heads,—when a turn of the road wholly concealed them from view.

Gone!—gone! The last wave!—the last glimpse! They turned away with that chill sense of world-emptiness which all know! They returned home to breakfast, and did actually eat, and fulfill their duties; only all through the day it was said, "Now they are taking their nooning at Wymondham." "Now they are at the White Horse at Attleborough." "Now they reach Thetford, tired, and ready for bed." Ann said, "The boys will fare the better, as I got Will to strap a good pillow on each seat."

But that evening another farewell took place which led to unhappy issues. Our Tutor, hindered from accompanying his pupils, and by ill-success thrown out of the employ of the angry Father and Bishop, found himself obliged to quit Norwich for London, and with difficulty obtained leave to travel in the suite of the Bishop's son. Before departing, he wished to confirm his influence over the girl he thought he had duped. He therefore lingered about the Castle, then uninclosed, and standing on a hill covered with grass, with here and there shrubs and hedges which formed a hiding-place for those who desired not to be seen. Here he lurked, carefully keeping out of the way, till after some considerable time he had watched Gerhardt pass; and then he saw Fanny's small form taking the direction toward the Cathedral. He allowed her to pass on for some distance, and then followed rapidly, overtaking her in the quiet Close.

From her start and uneasy look, he judged he was hardly welcome; but he said, "Fanny, I could not leave for London to-morrow without seeing you. But I hope soon to return and find you free."

Fanny did not like his moody tone, and wanted to be rid of him, remembering Gerhardt's charge; so she said, "I wish you had not followed me; and I must not stay with you, nor meet you any more."

"Why, Fanny, is this my return? How so changed—who has set you against me?"

"No one," she replied; "but if you must know, my master has persuaded me to accept Gerhardt: so you must give me up."

"Not I, indeed," he exclaimed, annoyed to the quick by these tidings. "I had sooner die! You must hear me. Did you not give me hopes of your preference? Who is Gerhardt, that he should come between us, and order you whom to see or to refuse?"

Poor girl! she now realized her difficulties. How could she shake him off? What if she were seen, and Gerhardt should know! These thoughts made her hard and hasty, and she said to him, "I am sorry to offend you; but you must go. I cannot—will not stay. I have promised you nothing, but I have promised Gerhardt."

This roused the Tutor, and led to some altercation, in which he threatened her bitterly to spoil her hopes and blast her character if she would not wait for his return. Her spirit also took fire, and she did not spare accusations and threats. She once or twice endeavored to fly, but he detained her by holding her, until she was in a highly nervous state of terror. Once again she nearly broke from him, and he had to pursue and hold her firmly while she struggled passionately to be free. Then a man appeared walking slowly on the other side of the Close. Fanny could not avoid a cry of displeasure at her restraint, when the man started, and came quickly toward them. It was Gerhardt, stick in hand. Fanny almost fainted. The Tutor let go his hold, and she escaped towards her father's house. The disappointed suitor next drew his sword and stood his ground; but seeing Gerhardt unalarmed, he began to retreat more and more quickly. Gerhardt called on him to wait, demanded his business with Fanny, and finally rushing on, beat down his sword at one blow. The coward now fled so swiftly that Gerhardt pursued in vain, only being able to inflict one or two severe blows over the back as he ran. Gerhardt proceeded to follow Fanny, who no sooner saw him than she fell on her knees and sobbed out, "Oh, Gerhardt!—he followed me. I thought he was gone. I told him I was yours; but he would not leave. He is wicked—he threatened to spoil my pleasure, and ruin me,—and I fear he will. Don't be hard on me, Gerhardt!"

"No, Fanny," he answered with some slight caress, "I am not. I heard you cry, and saw the fellow hold you. 'False friends are worse than open enemies.' I hope I made him remember it with my stick. But I warned you, and wish you had not got in his way. 'A good name seeks luster in the dark.' If I find rivals in my way now, Fanny, much as I love you I shall give up the chase. Even now, if you prefer that man, say so, and I leave you."

"Indeed I don't!" said the girl, moved as she had never been before. "I never hated him so. I thank you for your protection. I am glad he is going, and I will have nothing more to do with him. Believe me, I am more yours than ever, Gerhardt."

Yet Gerhardt was rather cold and distant, and it required some talks with his good angel, Mistress Hannchen, to bring him fully round; while she also used her powers with Fanny to confirm the warning and the better impressions which the girl had evidently received. Gerhardt said, "'Forewarned is forearmed.' If I find the fellow about her again, I wash my hands of her forever." That was his *ultimatum*.

CHAPTER X.

THE RECTOR'S PARISH VISITS.

"All are scattered now and fled:
Some are married, and some are dead;
And when I ask, with throbs of pain,
When shall all these meet again
As in the days long since gone by?
The ancient time-piece makes reply,
Forever—never,
Never—forever."—LONGFELLOW.

EARLY in the morning of the traveler's departure, the good parson called for his little Alice, and ordered her to make ready for a walk, in order to call on a number of his parishioners.

"Father dear," said Alice, "is this to be a visitation of 'all sorts,' or only of 'chosen vessels?'"

"Suppose we step in and see first my brother clergy, Allen and Kirby."

They soon reached the door of a tall house in the narrow street of St. George's, Colegate. The Rector observed, "Most likely they will be together here;" and he lifted the latch without ceremony, as these brethren were accustomed to do, and passed into the well-known study. Alice entered a side-room to comfort herself with her friends Jane, Harriet, and John.

Her father was at once saluted by two manly voices, "Welcome, brother,—in the very nick of time."

"Not," added Kirby, a man of burly form and decided tone, "that we have good news to give you."

"No," said Allen, in softer and more rounded phrase; "but have you received the new interrogatories from our busy Bishop?—a nest of serpents rather than wren's eggs," he added, unable to repress the pun.

"Yes, I have," Bridge answered; "and I brought it here this morning for conference. It is a catechism hard to answer. It means the formation of an inquisition, and the striking down of our most valued privileges."

"One hundred and thirty-nine questions!" exclaimed Kirby; "over two for every Sabbath in the year!"

"Hearken," said Allen: "'Does the minister use conceived prayers before or after sermon? That hits us all. This, also: 'Do the parishioners do reverence to the chancel when going in and out of church?' 'Are the graves dug east and west?'"

"Rank Popery," said Kirby, slapping his sturdy hand on the oaken table; "we must withstand it at all risks."

"Hold, my quick friend!" said Allen, with a cautious and deprecatory gesture. "The Bishop is our lawful Ordinary, and the orders of the Prayer Book are on his side."

"Nonsense!" cried Kirby sharply, then apologetically adding, "I crave pardon; but is this decent reverence: 'Hath your minister read the Book of Sports in church?'"

"That," rejoined Allen, "is a story of the last reign: the book was buried with our wise Solomon."

"I pray it may never rise again," remarked Bridge; "nor James either. It is evident, however, that our lectures and afternoon services and prophesying meetings are all to be abolished. There is to be but one service a week. Plenty of sports and wakes will be encouraged. Abundance of saints' days, religious ceremonies and pageants,—all these are meant to wither up the fountains of the Reformation. Brethren, brethren! what are we to do?"

Said Kirby, "I don't mean to stand it;—it is clearly against my Master's words. I am in correspondence with an old colleague who has already found refuge in Holland. After some hard trials, he is finding peace and work there. I will follow him, and perhaps even go with him to America, where many exiles have found rest even in the wilderness. Anything were better than to be slaves in religion."

"Oh," said Allen, "to leave England were like quitting my life and the world! Every other place is barbarian and wretched. I had sooner die."

"Say not so," answered Bridge. "We hear noble things of the Dutch piety and liberty. Yet I own, to leave this land would make me echo the words of the Master at Gethsemane: 'If it be possible, let this cup pass.'"

"But it was not possible for him," said Kirby decisively, "and it will not be possible for us. Go we must—at least I must; and I hope, dear brethren, you will not be long after. Think how Polycarp and Cyprian, Wycliffe and Luther, took up their crosses."

"Yet, brother," replied Bridge more gently, "they did not fly; they remained at their posts faithfully."

"And in so doing," exclaimed Kirby, full of fire to defend his position, "they forgot the Saviour's words, 'If they persecute you in one city, flee to another.' Besides, Cyprian did withdraw into concealment, and his noble death at last showed him to be no coward."

Long and anxious was the conference between these good and learned men. Many were the books taken from the shelves and promptly quoted. Many branches of discussion were opened, in rapid succession. Close and strong was the disputation, yet without the least breach of brotherly love. They parted after earnest prayer for themselves, their bishop and rulers, and for the whole Church of England. They resolved to leave their wardens to answer the Bishop's questions according to the actual facts, and to leave the result to Providence.

On calling for Alice to pursue their walk, the Rector was surrounded by her little friends, who were eager to keep her awhile. As he felt more disposed to think than to talk, he assented to leave Alice, promising soon to return and take her with him.

The Rector's first visit was to a small dyer's shop of a widow named Freeman, who, with her son, Jacob Freeman, were notoriously cantankerous persons. The clergyman was eager to escape them, and to mount up-stairs to see a dying daughter. But the mother, a fanatical Antinomian, intercepted him, saying, "Go to Lyddie!—you are too good for the likes of swine like us. You deceived my husband that he slept in Jesus. He was never of the elect. He talked of believing and seeking, and you encouraged him. Bless you, that's no use! And now you are deceiving Lyddie with the same flip-flap-floppery nonsense."

The son, a bigoted admirer of Wren, added, "You come to the dying without sacrament or holy water, wafer or candle, oil or censer. You a priest!—the Bishop will soon send such clergy packing."

"You always were a quarrelsome youth," replied the parson: "you used to kick in your cradle instead of smiling and crowing!"

With this jest he passed on, the mother shouting, "Go tell her the truth—she is a vessel for destruction!" and the son, "Tell her you are a sham priest,—do!"

Up-stairs a young girl with fair and affectionate face, but hectic cheek, not far from the last change, welcomed her friend and pastor. "Dear sir, forgive them!—'tis most ungrateful; but father loved you, and so do I. Jesus sent you to show us the path of life."

He sat down, and forgot all in her earnest questions about Christ and Heaven,—all which became wonderfully real to him as he met the wistful eye of the young pilgrim so near home. Her warm responses, her loving thanks, were a wondrous contrast to the false and fiery spirit produced by error in the rest of the household.

The pastor then paused to see a wretched and ignorant family, but found there one of his devoted lady assistants, Hannah Vores, who, with good means and a large heart, carried out endless charities among the poor. She had a pleasant face, but a hurried, nervous manner: her feelings were too quick for her expressions. "Thank you, dear sir,—heard that you wished —came at once. You know how ready I am— here is real distress—I will see to it."

The Rector retired, cordially thanking his good friend, and leaving the case with her.

His next visit was to a poor dyspeptic old man,—a complete hypocrite, ever complaining of neglect. Here he found Grace Friend, another of his visitors, a fine tall lady, with handsome features and great play of gesture. She was said to be "all heart," and a gushing emphasis was habitual to her.

"Well, Gaffer, how are you to-day?" said the Rector.

"The Lord be praised!—for an old, worn-out body, His mercies are wonderful. This dear, good lady, and many more precious ones, never let me want."

"I am sure it is no more than we ought," said the excellent lady; "we do it to the Master."

The old fellow rejoiced in these sentiments, and rejoined, "There's many will suffer presently for not doing so—to us His jewels." He then entered on a disagreeable description of his maladies and pains.

"Poor fellow!" said sympathizing Mistress Friend, "you need grace indeed." The parson's face expressed a very different feeling as he turned and departed. On others of the sick and dying, or the poor, the pastor called,—High Church, bigoted Catholics, sound Christians and Puritans, or crotchety and pugnacious sectarians, and even utter unbelievers,—with loving words for all.

The Rector also looked in on his friend the notary, Taylor,—a young, tall, slim figure, with raven-black shaggy hair, fine, broad, open forehead, dark lustrous eyes peering through his glasses,—a face not easy to read, and full of humorous twists and sarcastic angles. His cleverness made him a power in Norwich among all parties. In religion he was no partisan, avoiding thus the chief perils of public life, and keeping his ideas to himself. But he was a thorough Englishman, and Commonwealth-man in politics,—hating tyranny and injustice, and laboring to get a patriotic Parliament.

"Good sir," said he, "I fear trouble is coming to you clergy, and you will be a *bridge* of sighs; but I hope you will not give up house and income for any question of vestments,—nor for any logic of Calvin or Arminius,—nor for the right to preach oftener or longer than folk wish,—nor to forbid a merry Sabbath to our youngsters."

"Friend Taylor, on these matters we do not agree; but you know you are sure of my vote for liberty in England, because I fear God."

"So you do—you do!" was the genial reply. "Yes, friend Pons, you have a real corner-stone in your arch: for a man very Churchy, you have wonderful common sense!"

He called on a Quakeress, Lucy Groves by name,—a small quaint figure in plainest costume; but her face beamed with goodness, and her eyes with a gentle intelligence. Her rich musical voice made the ministry she exercised among her people very persuasive. Being a lady, and wealthy, she feared not to speak her mind to rich as well as poor. With her he found a remarkable man with large figure, massive lofty head, brown, quiet, observant eyes, and rather critical though humorous lips.

Thomas Brightling, churchwarden and citizen, was prominent for science and intellect, and but for a certain lethargy, which required special events to waken it, he would have been the chief man in Norwich. His daughter Lucy was with him—little less notable than her father in literary circles. They were conferring on the Bishop's new articles, and on a summons sent to the Quakeress to appear at communion in the Cathedral on pain of penalties.

"Alas! this compulsion in religion brings sore trial," Bridge said, "to faithful souls."

"Which rogues easily escape," cried Lucy Brightling. "Now I'll wager that my dad can buy you off from this summons;—only that, I suppose, you will repudiate."

"And so," replied her father, "you would put your friend among the rogues, Lucy!"

"Don't talk nonsense, dad," said she; "you know you can do it if you will."

"Well," said he, "that fat chaplain, Bennett, would doubtless take gold, and cross off Lucy Grove's name."

"Nay, nay," replied the Quakeress, "that were doing evil that good might come. I must abide the issue."

"Indeed, if these severities and Popish forms are pushed much further, I and many a sincere Churchman," said the warden, "will be driven from Puritanism into secession, or even Quakerism."

"How absurd you are, dad!" replied his daughter. "You are too lazy ever to leave your comfortable corner in St. George's."

"I, at least," said the parson, "hope he will not leave his corner till I leave my post. But who can tell what is coming next? Farewell; it is time that I went to fetch my little daughter, who will wonder what has become of her truant father."

When the Rector and Alice reached home, they found all ready for an early dinner. Mistress Bridge greeted them, and they related to each other, and discussed, the various events of the day, as those only do who are used to perfect family unity.

As the day was bright, the Rector offered to take a row on the river, which was a favorite pastime of the citizens. He sent to ask the Allens to accompany them, but only Harriet and John appeared. They crossed into the Close, and the ladies called on Dame Norris, the widow of a former clergyman, to ask for her company. She readily assented, and soon came forth,—trim and buxom, fashionably attired; sharp, and rather chilling at the first approach, but full of mirth, and almost coquetry, while her sententious and quick repartee was very piquant.

At the old Ferry Gatehouse, which was even then a very ancient relic of some earlier monastic tower, romantically hanging over the stream, a sort of barge was moored, and adorned with smart cushions, flags, and streamers. It had one mast, and a large sail, which, however, could not always be used. It was chiefly propelled by long *quants*, or poles, which two men pushed against the bed of the shallow river in place of oars. The men walked along the opposite sides of the barge with the ends of their quants resting against their shoulders, and so slowly urged the vessel in the opposite direction.

The party took their seats in this pleasure vessel, and soon leaving the city walls, were out amidst a broad plain of meadow-land covered with grazing cattle and bounded by ridgy hills on either sides. Between these no doubt the salt seaonce flowed in a broad arm of which this narrow twisting stream of fresh water, with its water lilies and green banks, was but the remainder. Here and there a glistening sail seemed to have lost its way, and to be roaming unseasonably amid the cows and buttercups.

The day was lovely, for the easterly wind had dried up all mist and haze, and the midday sun poured down in full power, so that every object looked crisp and shining. The hush of the country, the far-off city noises, the lowing of the cattle, the humming of insects, the regular tread and soft whistle of the quanters, the airy songs of larks and finches, the gentle coo of pigeons, and the slight dash and ripple of the boat cutting the water, were musical and poetic sounds which quieted the nerves, while the fresh breeze exhilarated the spirits.

The friends lounged on their easy seats, quietly drinking in enjoyment at every sense, while the laughter of youthful mirth scarcely disturbed the feeling of happiness and peace. It seemed one of those seasons of recreation when Paradise descends again, and surrounds the tired children of earth with its loveliness, rest, melody, and peace of heart.

They amused themselves by recitations from Quarles' *Emblems*, Ben Jonson's lines describing the beauties of Penshurst, and Spenser's verses on the Cave of Sleep. John Allen gave the ballad, "When this old cap was new;" Harriet some lines from Browne on the banks of the Thames. They sang glees, catches, and madrigals. Alice repeated Carew's delightful lines on Spring:—

"Now that the Winter's gone, the Earth hath lost
Her snow-white robes; and now no more the frost
Candies the grass, or calls an icy cream
Upon the crystal lake or silver stream;
But the warm sun thaws the benumbed earth,
And makes it tender—gives a second birth
To the dead swallow—wakes in hollow tree
The drowsy cuckoo and the humble-bee.
Now do a choir of chirping minstrels bring
In triumph to the world the youthful Spring,—
And all things smile."

John Allen sarcastically rejoined by Wither's cutting verses,

"If she be not fair for me,
What care I how fair she be?"

While they were thus refreshing their minds and hearts, the Rector pointed out the rapid turn in the stream, and the approach of Whitlingham, the goal of their voyage. There was the brown unleaved wood just swelling into bud, and clothing the steep hill, and the little old church, and the long straight reach of the shining river beyond. Here they landed for a short stroll, and picked the early spring flowers —the blue speedwell, yellow celandine, white anemone, and pink geranium. The young people presented pretty bouquets to the elders, and garlanded each other's hats and necks.

The men were soon ready for the return, and they re entered the boat. All went well till at an abrupt wind of the river where it was shallow they grounded on a bank of mud several feet from the river side. One of the men plunged in above his waist and succeeded in wading over, though he emerged with a thick coating of dark fetid slime. He and his mate formed a sort of bridge of quants and narrow planks just below the surface of the water, yet affording a rather risky means of crossing.

John Allen makes the first trial, and is over with a rush. The Rector crosses with wet feet and a good leap. The affair now seems rather jocular than tragic. Dame Norris tucks up her skirts and follows, pretty deep in water, but cheers the others, saying, like the mermaid, "Follow, follow, follow me!" Harriet boldly skips after, singing, "Whither shall I follow, follow thee?"

Dame Bridge and Alice, close behind, now prepare to make the attempt as nearly together as they dare. The mother is across, and is received by her husband, when splash . . . . a board gives way . . . .

Alice is not to be seen.

"Alice!—where is my child Alice?" screams her mother.

"Alice!" cries her father in agony.

An awful interval elapsed of unbearable misery, while the shocked hearts sought, and failed to realize the terrible probability, and eye met eye in sympathy of distress.

"Here I am, mother!" faintly whispers a soft voice from the grass at their feet. There Alice lay, all dripping and frightened, and the mystery was explained by the boatman, who was holding a rope that encircled the girl's waist.

"Look ye, sir," said he; "I saw she was trembling, and I just slipped this coil under her arms in case of mishap, or she might have been hard to find under water."

"Brave fellow!" said the Rector with trembling voice; "come to me to-morrow for such reward as I can give."

"Reward enough to see her there," said the boatman.

They began their return by rapidly climbing Blofield Common, and scarcely pausing to note the splendid view at the summit. Their hearts were full of the thought of what would have been their loss had Alice sank. As they reached Thorpe, they resolved to tarry with their friends the Ridgeleys. They were most hospitably welcomed, dried and refreshed, and found very opportunely their beloved medical man, Doctor Hope, on a visit there. The kind family of the Ridgeleys consisted of the father, a retired merchant, with his wife, a lady of strong judgment, and a queen in managing her own household. There were also two accomplished daughters.

Doctor Hope was one of the ablest physicians in Norwich, and a man who blended the loveableness of a child with the control of a master,

—a perfect gentleman, of grave, quiet manner, but fond of a frank gossip and a good story. He was a widower with one daughter. May Hope was clever and merry; her character offered a sparkling surface, but with deeper heroism dormant below. There also were found lawyer Brightling and his daughter Lucy, who were constantly quarreling in purest fun. Such was the party surrounding the supper-table, on which appeared many dishes—pre-eminent, a noble roasted swan, with its neck and head erect, and covered with natural skin and down. This is a special dish among the wealthy of Norwich.

"It is our mother's birthday," said the eldest daughter; and her *preux chevalier*, or husband, has never let the day pass all these years without a birthday ode. Here is the present effusion." After suitable healths and good wishes, which Dame Ridgeley answered, the poem was read, and admitted to be a cultivated and pleasant composition.

The conversation then took a more general turn, and the Rector alluded to the Alderman's journey to London, and to other proofs of serious events in Church and State which were at hand.

"Surely," said the mild and cautious host, "Government will not go to extremes. We should not hastily suspect or resist the powers that be. Let us wait till we see what the Parliament will effect."

"I am much of the same opinion," rejoined the clergyman; "but if Popish tests are required, one must throw all over."

Lucy Brightling said, "That's very well in theory, but it's another matter to give up the little comforts of home and society. Now, dad, speak out—Will you break with your friend the Bishop, who gives you archæological dinners? Will you give up your club of well-to-do people who smile alike at Puritans and Papists, and love good living and good books? Will you forego your friendship for dear Sir Thomas Browne, and his snug house by St. Peter's Church, with his museum of odd books—rare eggshells—curious plants, and his subtle conceits and witty converse? Will anything induce you to break away and fly like a wretched bittern to the swamps of Holland?"

"My child, I don't know," said the good man, thoroughly moved, his large eyes swimming in tears. "I am often an unworthy coward, and, as you say, fond of comfort and of my coteries; but I feel that times are at hand requiring the spirit of the martyrs. Christ is my Master, and I cleave to Him: perhaps I could not suffer much for Him, but this I know, the laurel wreaths of future history and the crowns of Heaven are for those who shall dare the worst for their glorious Master."

To such noble resolves all present expressed their enthusiastic assent.

"Dear husband," added the Rector's wife with calmer mood, "take the course your judgment approves, though it involve the loss of all; and Alice and I will never hold you back when the time comes." Tears were in all eyes, and hearts and nerves were high strung.

CHAPTER XL.

THE BITER BITTEN.

"Ein verfolgter Fuchs rettete sich auf eine Mauer. Um auf der andern Leite gut herab zu komnen ergriff er einen nahen Dornstrauch. Die Dornen ihn schmerzlich verwundeten Elende Helfer rief der Fuchs die nicht helfen können ohne zugleich zu schaden."—LESSING.

WHEN the miserable Tutor escaped by sheer lightness of heel from the stinging strokes of Gerhardt's vigorous arm, he found refuge in the dusky hiding-places on the Castle Hill. Here he writhed with pain, and rubbed his aching shoulders, while he asked himself in his fury what revenge he could exact.

Should he watch his returning foe, and sally forth unawares to assassinate him? But he had lost his sword, and had a wholesome dread of that stick. Besides, he was a coward as well as a bully, and he soon revolved a mode of retaliation far worse than any personal harm. Yes, he could gall him through Fanny, and make his jealousy his torment. He would punish her at the same time, by the ruin of her prospects, for her insensibility to his offers. Yes, he must go, but ere long to return and work out his plot. Yet how was he to get away? He knew he had lost the favor of the Father and the Bishop by the fearful loss they had discovered through the Fleming's counter-robbery.

There was but one horse for him. He had a strong hold on Stephen Wren,—not indeed of the most honorable kind, having aided the lad in his youthful escapades, and got into his baser secrets. He knew he would wish to have him near at hand in London, and would readily let him travel with him the next day. He went therefore to the Palace in search of this friend; and though at first the Bishop objected, he at last agreed to refer the matter to Father Christopher.

"What has Father Christopher to do with me, Father?" said Stephen; "he isn't my father, and I don't see why he should decide for you."

This was Stephen's usual dodge—to work on his father's vanity and jealousy of rule.

"Go, Stephen, and ask the Father kindly to step here."

Father Christopher presently appeared, and the case was stated, when, to the surprise of all, he replied, "I could not advise that Master Green should go as Tutor, or in any responsible post; simply to journey to town in your son's company might be allowed; but I should first wish a private conversation with him."

"Very good,—then it's settled. I will go back to my packings. Green, come to me soon."

The Tutor followed to the priest's study, where, the kneeling and benediction over, Father Christopher said sternly, "I presume you expect what I have to say. You have failed more than once in matters trusted to you; happily you are only in your novitiate, and not yet ordained as a priest. I can release your vows, or appoint a very serious retreat and discipline in order to your reinstatement. But I believe in your zeal, and I know you can serve our objects, though not in our society. If you solemnly promise to do so, I will cancel your vows, and even recommend you to the Duke of Buckingham, where you may have important instructions, and still keep a hold on your old pupils and the Bishop's son. Will you swear to act still in the interests of holy Church?"

"Father, I swear with all my heart, and I thank you for the leniency you show in my trouble. It has been no fault of mine to have failed."

"Say not so, my son; you have been unwatchful. Some cross-purposes, some self-indulgence, has been allowed to interfere with the path of simple duty."

The Tutor started self-reproached, but the Father seemed only generalizing, and continued, "Very serious is the loss to us, and very helpful the documents to our enemies, if they succeed in taking them to London; but we have sent after them a force authorized to spare no means in order to recover the stolen property, and baffle their endeavors. If peril or death come to them in consequence, their blood is on their own heads. You will probably meet them returning, and learn what has chanced. I will prepare instructions for you to follow out in London, and name to you a confidential person there through whom we can correspond. Farewell;—be faithful, and may you be more prosperous."

The Tutor retired with much relief, for his Jesuit ties were becoming irksome to him. Rejoining his friend, he related his success, and they made many jokes on the facility of their elders.

"When we get to London they can't be watching us forever," said Stephen. "I shall get away from school by your help, with invitations from the Duke—true or untrue; and we will dine at the new French taverns, and go to the play, and sup with the actors, and see some life."

"I shall be glad to accompany you. I wonder how the Feming and his party are to-night. I expect they will be set upon. They won't all reach London alive."

"I wish I was with their enemies," said Stephen. "I could gladly run my sword through that coxcomb George, whom I shall always hate."

"Have you a good allowance from your father, Stephen?—you'll run through a good sum, I reckon," asked the Tutor.

"Pretty fair," said the youth; "but I guess I can get more. Lord Norfolk's son, with whom I go up, tells me there are lenders and Jews who will let a Bishop's son have all he wants. I shan't spare."

"I am sure," replied the Tutor, "my father will be happy to find you what you want, if you only give bills on your coming of age. Your father must buy them up."

"Capital!—then we will live like princes, and enjoy all the good things of London. But did we not promise your handsome widow, Madame Coligny, to pay her a late visit? I know you have singing birds under the hedges, but this is your canary in the gold cage. Here is your main chance: she is undoubtedly rich and independent; decidedly attractive — perhaps, too clever; and she will do anything for you."

This Madame was an English lady who was the recent widow of a French gentleman, who, having purchased an estate near Norwich, died, and left her in possession of his good things. She was gay, and seemingly not averse from filling his place, but also bent on seeking a mate who could add to her worldly resources.

The Tutor had worked his way to this lady's good graces by his flatteries. He had passed for the son of a rich money-lender and follower of Buckingham who had an early fancy for the Church, of which he was now weary, and who would soon get a good place about the Court. Rather slowly, for she was a cautious nibbler, the lady hinted of her husband's estates in France and Spain, and of her own connections and possessions in England.

Both these persons were at last so far convinced of each other's eligibility, as to admit of flirtation, and even of an understanding that the Tutor should throw off the clerical character, go to London and push his fortune, and come down to claim his fair and well-portioned bride. Stephen was a favorite with the lady, and a confidant in the whole affair. He admonished his friend that night to make his ground as secure as possible before leaving. Why should they not be married before starting the next morning? Madame had a keen scent, and some cavalier might cut him out, and secure this golden chance before his return.

The lady received her friends with delight. She was round and ruddy, cheerful and witty, very elegantly dressed,—only just sad enough to support the position of a long leave-taking. She had two young nieces with her—pretty and stylish as herself, who did the agreeable to Stephen while his friend enjoyed a *tête à tête* with her.

"It is very good of you, sir, to give me your last evening. I fear I must make some other lady very jealous."

"Madame, be sure when away from Norwich you will be my first and only remembrance."

"You are polite: we shall greatly miss you also. Few know as much as you of my affairs. I wish if a few hundreds would be convenient for a time you would use them for me. My steward says I lay by too much."

"Thanks, Madame,—but my father has ample means: even the Duke borrows from him. He will provide all I need till the Duke appoints me an office—perhaps about the Court?"

"Ah, then, I fear, the charming ladies of honor will be too tempting."

"Dear Madame, they can never efface your image from my heart. I am ready to give you the best pledge of fidelity. You know how wholly devoted I am to you—why not waive scruples, and let us be united in private before we part?"

"Oh, sir, consider!—how could I think—a widow hardly a year!"

"Dear Madame—in perfect confidence. In a short time I shall return, and we can take our own time for the publication. For my peace of mind, I beseech you!"

"Ah, if I thought indeed it would make you happier! But there could be no legal deeds or settlements, though I would order my lawyer at once to prepare to place everything—as was the case with my former marriage—entirely in my husband's control. I make that an absolute condition."

"Madame, you are generosity itself!" replied he, with sparkling eye. "My father also will not be content without a proper settlement on my wife; to which the Duke will add, as he always does with his people. But what are these bagatelles between true hearts? Can I hope for favor to my bold request?"

"It is odd," said the lady, laughing, "but my cousin, the clergyman of our parish, was joking yesterday about your attentions; and he said his services were at my disposal at a moment's notice. Certainly that was strange!"

"Quite *apropos*, indeed," replied the gentleman. "Do embrace his offer! Shall I bear the notice?"

"Nay, I will arrange it myself.'

The young men took leave after a whispered word or two respecting the morning, and an expression of deep gratitude from the Tutor to the widow.

"Well done, Green! I think you have fastened the rivet this time. She is a splendid prize. Of course to morrow sees her entirely yours. How about her property?" was Wren's remark when they were by themselves.

"As her husband," replied Green, "I shall be safe, for she promises to place the whole under my control, as it was in her former marriage."

"Lucky fellow!" said Stephen, with a slap on the back. "Few widows are as good as that. And what about your settlements?"

"I made the most of my father and the Duke, and of my future prospects."

"Well, old fellow, I must say you are good at a bargain. Were you born in Yorkshire?"

"It's precious lucky her cousin being clergyman of the parish, and ready to marry us," cried the bridegroom-elect.

"Her cousin!—old Barfoot! Well, I never knew he had any relations. Fine girls, those nieces! If I were staying here, they might be dangerous; but my mind is full of London."

The next morning was chill and dreary; a thick fog lay over the city, driven by an easterly breeze from the sea up the valley of the Wensum, without force enough to carry it past the spires and chimneys which obstructed its passage. The party met at the time appointed, but there was little disposition for mirth. Hurry and secrecy are bad handmaids for Hymen. The church was full of mist, and the clergyman was taciturn, like one too early aroused from sleep, and going about as in a dream. Nothing was said about the sepulcher of him whose rights over the living were receding into the far-off distance. The voices heard in the service were hoarse and low, as if from fear of observation. Still, all was done and signed regularly, and the lady at least showed some emotion as she received the final salute and the necessary farewell.

"Be careful of yourself, sweetheart," she said. "You will not be long away. Let me know soon what the Duke appoints for you. I cannot remain long here in your absence."

"My dearest wife," replied her husband, "I shall have no peace till we meet; but you must stay here till I return. Just lend me your purse to remember you by, and take mine in return. Yours is the fullest, I know, but that will be all right." She seemed strangely reluctant about so small a matter, but the exchange was made, by which Green was some hundred pounds better equipped for his journey. They parted at the church door, and already they seemed to have caught some of the chilliness of the weather. That purse was all that Green ever realized of his wife's great fortune. It may as well be told at once that she was an adventurer as well as he. It was a fresh case of *the biter bitten.*

CHAPTER XII.

EN ROUTE FOR LONDON.

"Then unto London I did me hie:
Of all the land it beareth the prize.
'Hot peasecods!' one began to cry,
'Strawberries ripe and cherries in the rise!'
One bade me come near and buy his spice;
Pepper and saffron they gave me heed,
But for lack of money I might not speed."
LYDGATE.

THE travelers fared not so well as some friends hoped, nor so ill as others dreaded.

Van Diense and George were on the alert from the warning given at starting. They were but a short distance out of the city when they found that they were watched. They journeyed for most of the day without being molested. "They will wait till it grows dark, or attack us when we are resting at Thetford by night," said the Fleming; "but I think we will balk them of their prey."

Inquiring about the road, they found it lay over bare moor, but that only a little way further past Harling was a small dense wood, with a quarry inclosed in it, where gypsies and thieves often lurked, and sallied forth upon passengers. They were advised to ride briskly through this place of ill-repute. As they reached this evil place, Van Diense listened, and heard distinctly the galloping of horsemen behind them.

He led the way, single file, into the dark wood by the narrow path, brushing through the close foliage. Carefully feeling their way, they soon came to open ground circled by lofty trees, and saw they were in a rocky camp, with a very small opening. The spot was happily unoccupied, and there was a shed or two serving for night shelter.

"Halt here till they pass," said the Fleming.

Now the tramp of the horses was very audible coming up;—nearer, nearer,—now close by. Just then two of their animals took to neighing aloud, and they made sure they were discovered. Every one drew his sword, and the Fleming and George were posted in the cleft which served for their Thermopylæ. But the troopers only pricked on the faster, not being surprised, or perhaps alarmed, at such sounds in that place. Away they hurry—further, further on the night breeze. They are gone!

Very quietly the Fleming then said, "Thank God!" and a general sigh of relief was heard. He continued: "We must take our quarters for the night here, and be glad we have so sheltered and safe an hotel,—perhaps safer than at Thetford. We are under God's open sky, and must watch for their return, and then perhaps try their metal."

So they fed, groomed, and picketed their horses. In the broken shed they were glad to find vessels and fire-irons. They soon kindled a fire and cooked a good meal; then all lay down on dry straw to rest.

Will Barnard was appointed to watch till he heard the horsemen returning. Notwithstanding their excitement and fatigue, most of the company were soon fast asleep. The Fleming as leader felt too much responsibility on his shoulders to follow their example, and resolved to share Will Barnard's watch. The Alderman, full of fatherly concern for his boys, kept awake for some time, and conversed in whispers with Van Diense; but presently he too succumbed to the unusual exertion, and slept heavily.

The Fleming then, reclining on his arm, and having looked all round on the quiet trees, up to the small circle of sky overhead,—at the recumbent horses, and the men and boys,—gave himself to deep musing over his whole position. He thought of his fond and gentle sister—his dearest tie to earth; and also more shyly of a lovely friend of childhood, long severed from him by circumstances, whom he should possibly see again in London. He forgot not his native land, Holland, then recently freed from tyranny, and holding a commanding place in Europe. He thought anxiously of the position of his adopted country, England, and the madness of her Stuart rulers,—the unsuspiciousness of the English people, and the stern civil war they must probably pass through. He lovingly remembered old Norwich, imperiled by her self-seeking Bishop; the evils surrounding the sleeping Alderman and his sons, for whom he foresaw heavy woes and awful reverses of fortune. He muttered his favorite German motto, "Wenn sorge schläft wecke sie nicht," and yet again that other, "Wenn Mann schläft Gott waket immer." He then turned his thoughts upon his own serious business and interviews on the morrow, which would mingle together statesmanship and trade, the world and religion, royalty and poverty, Jesuits and Puritans, romance and prose, reality and disguise, and perhaps even love and danger, in an intricate web the main pattern of which all lay clear before his trained intellect, and was committed to the benison of his celestial Guide.

The young moon now peeped through the interlacing boughs, frogs croaked loudly, bats wheeled in soft and startling circles, slight puffs of the night breeze fanned his cheek, now and then the horses stirred or pawed. Will Barnard gave occasional symtoms of vitality by drumming with his fingers on the log which was his seat, or by turning his head this way or that for observation.

"Ha! was that the cracking of a dry branch, or—or——"

"They come!" cried Will. "Wake up all."

Yes, there was the sound of horses' hoofs, but in slow and labored trot.

"They have not rested long," said the Fleming; "they are well breathed and exhausted;" while at the same time he aroused the rest.

"Come, friend Sherwood,—not like your cozy bed in Norwich."

"Friend, I am ready," said the Alderman, "to defend my boys."

They would have left the lads asleep; but first George and then Edward leapt on his feet, rubbing his eyes, and making all laugh by asking, "Where are we?" and, "What is up now?"

Silently they all took up their arms. The Fleming led to the road-side under cover of the trees.

"George, look out for Rabbit-head," said he in a whisper; "'tis he I want—let the others pass. I hope he may come last."

They could now distinguish the advancing sound of eight or ten troopers. Three rode abreast; and on the wind came sounds of riotous singing and loud shouts. As they drew near, George, looking carefully, whispered, "No Rabbit-head!" "Let these pass," said the Fleming. It was a trying moment; but the three went by unsuspecting, only one saying, "Prick on faster,—this place is dark, and has a bad name." Two more came in view; and after a moment's critical study, the word was given again, "Pass these, too." So they rode by, one of the men slashing at the trees with his whip, and saying, "I'd like to have tussled with them as men." To which the other answered, "Safer to have roasted them in their beds." The cut of the whip had caught George on the ear and face severely; but the boy neither moved nor cried out. Three others were then allowed to pass, riding briskly and in silence. Two more were seen some way behind, and a good way from each other.

"The first is Rabbit-head," said George.

"Leave him to me and my men," said the Fleming. "Master Alderman, will you and your people deal with the other as you find needful?"

Rabbit-head was heard calling, "Ride up! ride up!" "Never fear," said his companion, "the road is as safe as a church. My head is on fire with the stunning ale." Just as Rabbit-head came up, the Fleming noiselessly laid hold of his bridle, while two of his men skillfully caught his arms and collar, and swung him to the ground. They gagged and blindfolded him, and bore him within the wood. So rapidly was this done, that his comrade never noticed his disappearance, but came spurring on, crying, "Ho! you villain, where are you? Coward, to leave me!" Away he galloped, swaying fearfully under the power of drink. In a few moments the wished-for papers on the person of Rabbit-head were found and taken. The man was set on his horse, still gagged and blindfold, and the horse willingly bore him after the rest. Without delay, the party, mounting, left their night bivouac for the road to Thetford. Suspense was over, and tongues were loosed.

"I fear," said the Fleming, "that I have been your Jonah in bringing all this trouble upon you."

"If so," returned the Alderman, "you have splendidly extricated us from it."

"I must say," the Fleming rejoined, "these boys have behaved most gallantly."

Will Barnard here pointed to George, saying, "Specially Master George. Look at his face; see what he suffered!" Then they looked, and saw a deep wound all along the poor fellow's temple and cheek, much inflamed and very painful.

The Fleming bathed it and bound it up, while the boy said, "Really, I was so excited that I hardly noticed it."

"That was the very moment, my boy, when perhaps you saved our lives."

George at once answered, "Edward too, had his foot stamped on by Rabbit-head's horse, but he bore it quietly."

"A good omen for the future lives of you both. Whatever your professions, presence of mind is perpetually required in human life," observed the Fleming.

"Alas! I fear," said the Alderman, "that my boys' lives may be spent in the service of soldiers."

"Not mine, I hope, father," said Edward, "unless in the battles of the Church and of the clergy for the cause of God."

"You, brother, are worthy of them," said George; "but if England wants her youth to fight for freedom, I should like to enlist among them."

"Well done, both of you, my dear boys," said Alderman Sherwood. "I hardly know which is the nobler. May you both bravely fulfill your duty as English Christians."

"Push on," said the Fleming; "we must still be on our guard. Behold the spires and castle tower of Thetford!—we bait there, and shall obtain news."

Turning into the High Street, they found the small town in much confusion, people thronging the streets, gazing at the chief hostelry, one side of which had been recently on fire, and but just extinguished. They learned from the host that after waiting for them in vain their rooms were filled by other strangers. In the night, when all were asleep, arose a cry of fire. A groom who slept in the stables said he was awoke by noises in the yard, and from his window saw men enter the lower part of the inn

with straw and wood. Having seen them set light to this, he watched them hurry away. This man immediately followed with water and cries of "Fire!" and thus the violence of the flames was got under, and the sleepers in the rooms above awakened.

When the riders had refreshed themselves, they continued their journey, amazed and grateful for their narrow deliverance from a horrible catastrophe. The rest of their ride was accomplished with but few adventures.

After the usual stoppages, the great City came in view, and soon the towers and spires of its churches welcomed them. Entering crowded Bishopsgate, they quitted the weary saddle and confining stirrup in the square court-yard of the ancient inn, the *Four Swans*, where, being expected, they met with a more ceremonious reception than they desired. The breathless wonder and curiosity of the boys in approaching the metropolis were indescribable; but as they drew near and found the roads just like Norwich roads,—the houses very similar to Norwich houses, and the great hotel where they rested only rather larger, but of the same order with the Norwich *Maid's Head* whence they started,—the passion of their eagerness gave way to a certain temporary disappointment which made them yawn and own they were very tired.

The large inn yard formed the interior of an oblong mansion shut out from the street by great gates, and into which the windows of the double galleries projecting from the four inner walls looked down. Many of the windows were lighted, and the yard was filled by a bustling throng of servants with lanterns, link-boys with glaring torches, and persons of more distinction who awaited the travelers' arrival. There was also a host of beggars, who expected an alms of gratitude after a safe journey.

The innkeeper and his matron hurried to offer their services. Then it was needful to hearken to the cry of *largesse*, and send away the troop of mendicants as contented as that race can be made. The party entered the public room, and stripped off the heavy outer garments, to their unspeakable relief; while they warmed their chilled limbs at the crackling blazing wood fire, and by sundry cordials and warm spiced drinks.

Various persons were waiting to claim their attention. The careful Head of Westminster School had sent a trusty man to inquire after the boys, and arrange for their safe conduct. Messengers awaited the Fleming from the company of merchant adventurers to which he belonged. Queen Henrietta had sent a page to fix a time for the Fleming's attendance at her Court. Besides these, a fierce-looking bravo in the service of the Duke of Buckingham made himself very troublesome by his pert insolence and provoking airs.

"Had anything happened on their road?" asked this fellow. "Yonder youngster seemed to have been in the wars. Were they going to Court? Had they any messages to charge him with to his master—ever ready to protect strangers? What nothing!—hell and furies! do they think to escape so? Thunder and lightning!"—and so on, he raved. Whilst rather bewildered by these needful arrangements, and the Buckingham spy pumping for information in the most impudent manner, a new arrival suddenly restored quiet to the whole scene.

This was the Secretary to the Dutch Ambassador, Herr Werter, well known to the Fleming, who at once took the company under his potential charge. With imperturbable good-humor and authority he dismissed all these claimants with promises and fees, and simply told the Buckingham scoundrel to take himself off, for if he wasted much time the constables would be on his heels. Withdrawing at last to their private room, Herr Werter sat down with the two gentlemen to learn their business. To him they readily unfolded their whole adventures and purposes. When they showed him the Papal commission, he shrugged his shoulders and said, "Double-faced Rome! Let me, however, take this document to my honorable master, or its possession may be dangerous to your safety. Already it has nearly been fatal to you. My man shall spread the intelligence that I have taken all your valuables into my custody: you will not then be further troubled by mischievous agents from the Duke or the Court."

He departed amid their cordial thanks, leaving one of his own servants to wait on them the next day.

It was time for rest. They indulged in loving and serious talk with the boys, in view of approaching separation.

"Oh, dear father, and good friend," exclaimed George, "what shall we do alone in this great dangerous city?"

"What indeed shall we do?" said Edward, bursting into tears.

They both clasped their father's neck, and embraced also the Fleming with unwonted tenderness.

"My beloved boys," at last said their father, suppressing his feelings, "be you Christian gentlemen. Do not be hasty in making friends, nor talk too freely. I believe Dr. Osbaldeston, the head master, is just and wise. The boys have had gentle nurture, like yourselves. Shun all quarrels, and be good-tempered. If you are teased or worried, laugh it down—command yourselves. Fear God, and look for the return home. May you then return with a noble character, and without spot, as I expect of you both."

The Fleming seconded this advice, and promised to see them whenever he came through London. Thus encouraged, they retired to rest, and slept soundly from sheer fatigue,—dreaming of scenes of a nature to be excited by the up-and-down motion on horseback, together with the wild adventures with soldiers, in midnight woods, the bursting fires about their bed, or the entering huge cities in which their best friends were severed from them, until a great storm of wind dashed them apart, and, then recoiling, drove them forcibly against each other in its furious rage.

While their night thus waned away, another party arrived in London from Norwich, including those choice spirits Green and Wren. These two had left Norwich in the train of the Earl of Norfolk. They had advanced some distance on the road, when Wren, looking up, observed, "Who are those horsemen approaching us?"

"They must be the troopers," said Green, "sent to pursue the Fleming's party, and recover the papers; they look as if they had been busy."

"But," replied Wren, "they have the air of defeat rather than success. We must speak with them."

The parties drew up and saluted each other with passing news and messages, but the Tutor beckoned to one of the leaders to draw aside.

"You overtook the party, no doubt?" was his question; "what success had you?"

"Cursed luck," was the reply. "We kept behind them most of the way, but lost sight of them before we came to Thetford. There we fired the inn, but the fire went out. On returning, the man whom you trusted with papers was set upon, and cunningly separated from us. Whoever it was they robbed him cleverly, and set him on his horse gagged and blindfolded to overtake us."

"Then they have succeeded," said Green, with gloomy brow, "in carrying these documents to London?"

They proceeded on their journey without much incident till they reached Newmarket, and were feasting in the inn when a party joined them coming from London. Among them was a lawyer going to Norwich on business. After some general conversation, lawyer Norbury began to speak of Norwich people. He was going down on business of a particular nature to a widow lady whose affairs required arrangement. "She is the widow of a French gentleman of property," he added.

Green became suddenly interested, and said, aside, "It must be our friend Madame Coligny."

Norbury continued: "I am instructed by the heirs of her husband."

"Heirs, indeed!" said Wren. "All Norwich believes her to be his sole heir."

"The heirs have heard," said the smiling lawyer, "that Madame was receiving attentions from gentlemen which might lead to marriage."

"I don't see how they can keep her from committing the offense of matrimony," cried Green, exulting.

"Assuredly not," replied Norbury, rather nettled at the tone of his companions. "They heard that she was likely to favor a very recent acquaintance. But we have made inquiries, and find him to be a poor adventurer, with neither position, means, nor prospects."

"Perhaps," said Green, "you are misinformed."

"Oh no, I have it all from sure evidence," said Norbury. "The heirs wish to prevent the possibility in time, and they send me down. But, gentlemen, it is time to end our conversation, and proceed on our journey. Should you know anything of this lady's favorite, as I partly suspect, persuade him to refrain."

"On what ground?" said Wren.

"On the ground," replied the lawyer, "that the lady has no property whatever—all belonging to her husband's heirs."

"But," exclaimed Green, "she herself told us, all was hers; and we know that she is in possession of a fine property in Norwich."

"Ah, gentlemen!" answered Norbury, with a polite shrug, "when a lady sets her mind on anything—— Well, the Norwich property is hers only for a year. I deeply regret disappointed hopes. Farewell,"—and so he took his seat in his carriage.

CHAPTER XIII.

AT WESTMINSTER.

"Then to Westminster gate I presently went,
When the sun was high at prime:
Cooks to me they look with good intent,
And proffered me bread, ale, and wine,
Ribs of beef both fat and full fine;
A fair cloth they gave for to spread,
But wanting money I might not be sped."

LYDGATE.

MORNING dawned fair and bright on the good City of London when the Norwich party awoke. The usual cries of "Milk ho!" "Water-cart!" "Fresh water-cresses!" "Bread hot!" "Herrings red!" and many more, were intensified that morning by the shouts and quarrels of a parliamentary election which was then taking place. The boys exulted in witnessing the stir of such a scene, but their elders would gladly have had a quieter day for the transaction of their various business. So soon as their early breakfast was over, they sallied out, attended by the servant of the Ambassador, as well as by their own attendants. The men carried swords for themselves and for their masters, in case of need, the latter having lighter arms in belt and at side. They went forth into the road within the Bishop's Gate, which was then almost vaulted over by the projection of each story, till at the summit the houses nearly met. There were, however, a few slanting rays of sunshine which revealed the open windows; and some flags and streamers were stretched on cords from side to side, where usually clothes hung to dry. The street itself was filled with booths and tents for the sale of goods, there being very few and small shop-fronts in the houses for their display. Crowds of well-dressed and merrily-disposed people were sauntering about over the whole thoroughfare, as carriages and carts seldom passed, and the pavement and causeway were hardly separated. Our travelers were not a little confounded by the hum and laughter of the mob, the cries of apprentices and salesmen, "Gentles, what d'ye lack?"—puffing their own goods and depreciating those of their rivals, the brawls of opposing factions meeting in bands on the road, and the hoarse remonstrances of the venerable watch.

Slowly they made their way to the fine abode of the Lord Mayor. Finding that his lordship was wholly absorbed in political duties, they merely left their names, with a promise to call on the morrow.

The boys were taken to Guildhall, to wonder at the City hustings erected there, and at the huge old figures of Gog and Magog, wishing earnestly that it had been one o'clock, so that they might have seen the giants descend to dinner. They pushed on through Cheapside, often risking a struggle for the wall with some mettlesome passengers, and made for the grand old pile, the old St. Paul's Cathedral—not for worship, but to see the great promenade and rendezvous of fashion, commerce, and intrigue, lounging and gossiping there. The lofty nave, from end to end, was one vast covered walk, like our exchanges or clubs, where appointments were made and kept by merchants, bargains were discussed, plots deliberated, and no small traffic in flirtation and match-making carried on. On this day it was specially thronged, from the public interest in the elections going on; and many grand ladies, with women of lower rank, mixed in the throng. The words incidentally caught in passing,—"French war—the Duke—Rochelle—the Archbishop—Parliament—the Queen—new headdress—cheap silks—gallant men—Popery—Eliot—Hampden—Pye and Cotton—Bradshaw and Maurice," may afford a fair key to the prevailing public ideas.

Reaching at last the opposite gate of the Cathedral, they struck the river at St. Paul's Stairs, where, having hired a comfortable wherry with an awning, they put off for Westminster. The change delighted them all, from elbowing through the crowd of the hot and dusty road to gliding along on the surface of the cool and shining river. The water was gay with many boats and vessels, and the colored streamers adorning the white sails showed some sympathy with the land bustle. Now and then a passing jest was uttered from boat to boat, while often a merry song, accompanied by harp, guitar, or trumpet, floating sweetly through the air, blended with the nautical orders—all in a sort of monotone chant—for "porting the helm," "reefing or setting sail," "sounding with the lead," "weighing or casting anchor." At Westminster Stairs they reluctantly left the pleasant boat and the beautiful river. Here they found themselves encompassed by a more dense and noisy tumult, for a tremendous contest was being waged by the candidates of the Government, Sir Robert Pye and Sir Robert Cotton, against the popular men—Bradshaw, a brewer, and Maurice, a grocer. One party shouted, "A pye, a pye, a pye!" and the other replied by "A pudding, a pudding!" celebrating their grocer. If one exclaimed, "Cotton!" the other answered with "Beer!" The one side exulted in "the King's Bobbies," and the other in "the People's Traders." Pye was the nominee of the favorite Buckingham, who as Steward of Westminster thought he should not have been opposed at all; but Bradshaw and Maurice (*beer* and *pudding*) carried the election by a thousand votes, and turned out their former burgesses for yielding to the King's loan.

Amid these lively and grotesque signs of popular feeling, our friends passed on by the noble Cathedral of King Sebert, Edward the Confessor, and of Henry VII. Full of admiration and interest, they presently reached the old portal of the Grammar School in Dean's Yard. Here nature found vent in one final embrace; and the boys, drying the last tears, stiffened their featutes into a true Spartan or Roman stoicism.

Dr. Osbaldeston, the Principal, was polite, though rather frigid; but he welcomed the lads kindly, gently boasting a little of the famous scions of gentility whom he had assisted to fashion. On Alderman Sherwood presenting Bishop Wren's message, the Doctor seemed interested, and said, "Aye, we were great chums at College. He has climbed high, but I make bishops. His son arrives this week in the train of Lord Norfolk."

The two elder friends strode away in silence toward the Dutch Embassy near St. James's. They felt less than ever disposed to separate from each other, but both felt the lack of the young enthusiasm and love whose inestimable value they now keenly appreciated.

"God bless the lads!" at last gasped out the Alderman; "I trust I have done right to let them go."

"I think you have," answered his friend; "a public school is a nursery for the world. Bless God, who has given you boys of such rare promise. I like their Doctor too: though strict, he understands boys. Surely he must be a Dutchman!" added the Fleming, desiring to force a smile. "He is portly, can hold his peace, and rein his temper; and I'll wager what you like—*he smokes*." Something of a laugh relieved their pent-up spirits when the servant respectfully pointed out the massive door-way of the Dutch Embassy.

Herr Werter soon welcomed them, and introduced them to his Excellency in his more private chamber. His manner was bland and observant, which is the outer mask of diplomacy. After a few general remarks, the Fleming plunged *in medias res* by asking his Excellency's advice about the royal loans required of his friend the Alderman and others. Mijnheer Von Pauw smiled, and answered, "That fear is now a winter swallow—it has flown away, since Parliament was called. The recusants are out of prison, and being returned as members. But the Alderman has only to ask the intercession of the Lord Mayor, who is in Court favor, in order to be personally secure."

"Then," pursued the Fleming, "what about the clergy who are now menaced with difficult questions and possible loss of livings?"

The Ambassador looked grave, and replied, "I must not interfere much with these home questions. The case of the Puritan clergy of England is like to be the hardest of all. I can only assure them, in emergency, of an absolutely safe refuge in Holland till the storm blows over. But, Mijnheer Van Diense, have you nothing to ask as to your own commercial stability in this uneasy country? Shall you not leave it?"

"At present, I think not," was the Fleming's reply. "If I should be driven away, I have a faithful foreman to whom I could leave the conduct of my English business. I shall avoid the storm as long as I can." They then heard that their documents were already in the possession of Sir John Eliot, who expected them at once, and had called together other leaders for conference.

In the meantime we will pass awhile to the house of the Great Duke, and observe the reception given to the new valet in his household. Baldwin Green awaited in an anteroom his summons to the Duke's presence. When called, he found the great man resting on his arm in bed, and ready to rise. Another valet was giving him his morning drink of milk and *eau de vie*. Green saw with dismay this man receive two fearful cuffs on the head, while the Duke cried out, "Stupid fellow! I said I would have pottage this morning. None of you have any brains except I beat it into you." Then seeing the new-comer, he said, "Now, little brat of the spit and flour-barrel, what can you do? Here, put on my hose." Green hastened to bring the articles, and stooped to the bed, when, with his strong foot the Duke caught him under the middle and made him turn a somersault and lie flat on the ground, while he heard the other valet say with a laugh, "Your Grace never did it more skillfully. Your Grace is in full pith to-day."

Green had the wisdom to pick himself up with the stockings in his hand; and as he put them on he said, "Your Grace, I also should have laughed to see that trick on another."

"Would you? You are likely to have a chance if you stop here,—isn't he, Jack?"

Half-dressed, his Grace lounged on his couch, sipping at his cup, looking at letters, and now and then questioning his valets. "Jack, has my blood hound Nick brought any report of the travelers from the *Four Swans?*"

"Yes, your Grace; he had bullied them out of all they had, when the *attaché* of the Dutch Embassy appeared, and took them and all their belongings under his charge; and poor Nick, afraid of the watch, was obliged to fly."

"Fool!—I wish he was here; I would flog the brute. Why did he not use his opportunity promptly?"

"Your Grace," said Jack, "these bravoes do not brook blows."

"Tush! my wages salve their rage. I could not order the wretches if I were not their master."

"Your Grace, may I presume to ask," said Green, "are these travelers a certain Fleming and others from Norwich?"

"Surely," replied Buckingham carelessly.

"Then I know them right well;—I have served in the Bishop's Palace."

"If you had been worth anything, they would have kept you, and not let you down to a valet's garret."

"'Tis no stoop to be your Grace's servant, specially to one born in the house," answered Green. "But I know this Fleming has State secrets."

"So I hear," said Buckingham with more interest. "Now you will be my setter to-morrow to point him out to my blood-hounds, for I must speak to him; and, mark ye, I must try and make friends with him."

"Your Grace—friends! Why he is against the Court, and in league with all the heretics and Puritans through the kingdom."

"What's that to me, fellow?" replied the haughty courtier; "keep your opinions to yourself. Do my service as I order. See, catch this, and woe to you if you fail." With this he cast the rich and precious cup he had been using towards poor Green, who made a vain effort to save it from destruction. It slipped through his trembling fingers, and was smashed.

As he was trying to pick up the broken pieces, the Duke seized a supple cane and dealt whack after whack on his shoulder, just where the unhealed wounds made by Gerhardt's stout stick rendered the flesh fearfully sore, until he fell on his knees and cried for mercy.

Further schemes were arranged by the Duke to insure an interview with the Fleming in his own reckless fashion, and Green's time of attendance for the day was over. When he left, he had been well cuffed with the hand, beaten with a stick, and kicked across the room,—so that he was sore all over in body and spirit, and thought to himself, "If this is the misery of one day, what have I to expect in a year? If Gerhardt and Fanny could see this wretched tool, they would think I was punished enough. Verily, I begin to feel I deserve it. The Duke has taught me something."

As he paced through the galleries of the great mansion, he suddenly came upon his father's friend the major domo.

To Green's salutation he bowed, saying, "Well, Master Green, what do you think of the service and of our master?"

"He is an excellent master, but I find myself rather faint and sore to stand longer. Pray let me retire."

Smiling, the old officer said, "The beginning is the worst, but you have pleased him."

"I should never have thought so," replied poor Green.

"Oh, but you have. Here are your month's wages, and this bill of fifty pounds to fit you out suitably. He expects a great service from you to-day."

When the Fleming and Sherwood arrived at the House of Commons and asked for Sir John Eliot, they were shown into a large chamber where was the great public leader busily writing. He was preparing before the opening session one of those stinging patriotic speeches dreaded by the Court. As the writer looked up to greet the entry of his expected guests, the searching eye, the full round head, broad and lofty forehead, and the robust yet refined expression, revealed at once the man of high honor, sagacious purpose, and resolute firmness. He had only just been liberated from the Gatehouse Prison. Eliot had sat in previous Parliaments from the reign of James. In the last he had taken the lead in the impeachment of Buckingham. Before venturing on this perilous service he made over his large estates to trustees for the benefit of his children, that he might be free to act, and bear in his own person alone the vengeance he was sure to encounter.

Having courteously saluted his visitors, Sir John thanked them for most important evidence, and very hard to obtain, in confirmation of the national grievances. He listened with great interest to the adventures by which these proofs came into their hands. Even as Eliot spoke, an usher announced Pym and Selden, Sir Benjamin Rudyard and Sir Robert Philips, Sir Thomas Wentworth, John Hampden, and Denzil Hollis, with others of the same great party. They were laughing heartily as they entered, which was explained by Wentworth, who said, "So it is true—no rank is safe from Steenie's audacity. Think of it—the proud Anne of Austria, Queen of France,—the villain! But the fox Richelieu smelt a rat about his cheese, and hunted him out of the kingdom. Another Helen, Paris, and Trojan war—only Paris is rejected in this case."

"Ah!" said Pym with scornful emphasis, "hence our new-born love for the Huguenots, while we persecute their brothers the Puritans. If our Duke wants royal adventures, he may be content with our own gay French Queen."

"But she hates the favorite," rejoined Eliot, "since he dismissed her French servants. She broke the glass windows with her little fist and vowed revenge."

"The Duke is a braggart, and would never have taken personal command of the expedition," said Rudyard, "but for your taunt, Eliot, in the last House. I think I hear you: 'The great general who had command of all, thought it sufficient to put in his deputy, and stay at home!'—that touched his vanity, if not his honor."

"His vanity," added Hollis, "has gained little by personal command. He had a superior force, and yet was disgracefully beaten. His own troops even mutinied. So much for the *great general!*"

"It seems that Laud," said Rudyard, "has been in higher favor of late. He very cleverly instructed his own clergy to preach up implicit submission to regal divine rights; and one of his preachers said, if he were ordered to put to sea in a ship with neither mast nor tackling, he would do so on the King's command."

"No wonder Laud is praised by the Court," rejoined Eliot, "for if there ever was ship without mast or tackling, it is the monarchy of England. But, gentlemen, to business: let me introduce two Norfolk friends who have obtained by singular skill and courage legal proofs of

Laud's underground tunneling to Rome. Here you see is a commission for one Father Christopher as Cardinal Legate of England, with Laud, Wren, and Montague under his direction as Papal bishops of England."

"What!" exclaimed Wentworth, "Laud a subordinate, and ride behind—never!"

"This document," interposed the Fleming, "he knows not of, and would not consent to. It was taken from the Father Christopher named in it, and who is now with Bishop Wren in the diocese. Here, however, are other papers from Panzani to Father Christopher, declaring that Laud and other bishops assent to take the Papal service."

The papers were then laid on the table, and carefully examined as to authenticity and integrity—specially by Selden, the great master in such matters, and were found fully to establish the plot between Rome and the English hierarchy. Selden, a man of short figure and quick motions, keen eyes and easy speech, said, "The Court of Rome is an old hare who has been often hunted and seldom caught. She has learned many shifts and doubles by necessity; but here at least we have her by the haunches."

The Norwich visitors were warmly thanked for their public zeal and important services: all protection was promised them, and questions were asked as to the state of Norwich.

Sir John Eliot then read the draft of his Petition of Right, reciting former provisions for personal liberty, and the shameful way in which these had recently been set at naught. He added four resolutions, embodying the entire set of principles which the people now required from the Government. General applause and interest followed the reading.

Selden declared he had "searched and written out all the records from the Tower, the Exchequer, and King's Bench," adding, "I engage my head that Master Attorney shall not find one precedent omitted."

Pym observed: "This document will be a noble bulwark of liberty, if we can pass it; but the Court will rage against being thus bridled."

On this Cromwell, a popular member just returned from Huntingdon, whose energy had already attracted notice, sharply exclaimed, "The Court has enough to do in cloaking the disgrace of its pet general. We must deal more roundly. The vices of this Court offend both God and man. We must not endure dissolution of the House again. We are called to dispatch business, but that is a mockery if the Minister can unseat us all before we have passed any important vote. Let this Petition come first, and be enforced." This Cromwell was he whom the courtiers called "*sloven*," because of his *dress*, for his linen was not white, and his coat was ill-made. He spoke with a rough voice, but so impressively that men whispered "Who is he?" when Hampden, his cousin and friend, said in a responsive whisper, "If we ever come to war, that *sloven* may be the greatest man in England."

Wentworth observed: "Buckingham is muzzled for this time, but his master will roar like a lion. He may come down to our House and clap some of us in prison."

"Then," replied Eliot, very earnestly, "we must stand our ground, even face to face with a king. We must be resolute. Should prison or death await us, some of us have put our estates into trust already. I know not who may fear to press this matter to the end, or may hope to obtain terms of compromise,—but not I, nor, I trust, any one here."

His eye seemed to rest uneasily on Wentworth, who was near him, and had just spoken. He had been trained as a Conservative, and, after wavering, had recently joined the popular side. His handsome face and dark complexion flushed and paled while, quickly touching his sword, he retorted, "Sir John, I know not what you mean. I have been in prison for the cause, though I have not always taken this side; yet a tardy resolve is often all the firmer; but if any one dares"—here his erect posture and indignant glance showed him greatly moved—"if any one insinuates that I am less true than himself, I defy him to combat, and declare him a liar."

Hollis and his friends gathered round him, muttering, "Shameful dealing—judging others by themselves!" and there was peril of a real conflict among these patriots.

Cromwell here threw himself between the two parties, and with an air of authority natural to him cried out, "Gentlemen, this is no beargarden. Quarrels help our enemies. Sir John Eliot's patriotism all England honors. This other gentleman—I forget his name—has his honors to win. But if he carries this matter further, I shall call you all to witness that he has come recently among us only to play the part of a divider or a traitor."

This interposition made Wentworth furious, and he pressed forward with menacing gestures, saying, "A country brewer is beneath my sword;—but I did not call Sir John Eliot a liar. I say he showed some doubt of my fidelity, which I will not brook."

Sir John Eliot now interposed, and, addressing Wentworth, said courteously, "Pardon me if I confess that I have been surprised at your sudden conversion; yet I know your ability to be great, and your honor, so far as I know, unblemished, so that we have readily accepted you as an ally. But again to your face I say that now is the time for honorable withdrawal, and not hereafter, when it would be treachery."

"Surely," echoed Pym, in deep voice,—"the basest treachery,—though I had to say it of an old comrade, Wentworth."

"Who talks of withdrawal?" answered Wentworth, who now felt he had gone far enough; "no doubt we have all counted the cost—it is no trifling gage; and we shall not hesitate to pay the forfeiture, or be damned as recreants."

The angry scene then subsided.

Eliot when parting from our friends said, "We are ready for the worst in such a cause. Dangers must not affright, but harden us. Subterfuge is the property of a coward; blows and wounds are the honor of a soldier. Fear must be subdued: though even the sun should tremble, and the immense fabric of the earth shake, yet the issue of time and virtue must be calmly expected. Death comes as a friend, and not as an enemy. He visits us at his own hour, expects no invitation, but has free liberty before him. He comes attended by many privileges, decked with flowers of happiness, rest, sweetness, and exemption from all the evils of this life. Farewell, my good friends,—every good fortune attend you." They turned away with these sad but glorious words in their ears, and prophetically feeling as if they had beheld the martyr and the Judas of the coming hour of trouble.

Cromwell and Hampden strolled away together. While they were engaged in earnest discourse, they suddenly found they had wandered into the ranks of the opposite party. They were known, for they heard men say, "There's the Huntingdon brewer, and the poll-tax rebel. Have at them!—let us drag them to the river." Matters indeed seemed very serious, as a group of wild ruffians approached, offering Cromwell a tankard of ale; and they shouted, "Drink to the Duke, psalm-singers! or you shall float in cold water."

Cromwell suddenly threw the cup away, and seized from two men their quarter-staves, one of which he gave to Hampden; the other he began to whirl round with much address, and said, "Fair play, my English boys! When my soldiers quarrel, I give them sticks like these to fight out their offenses."

The man who offered the tankard advanced to meet the challenge. Before long, the combatant's staff was flying through the air, and the man was at Cromwell's mercy. Others took his place, but with no better success, for the strength and rapidity of Cromwell's movements soon stretched them on the ground. Hampden also had taken up his position at the back of his friend. He wielded his long pole with little less adroitness. At last, the bravo of Buckingham, furious to beat the successful fighters, attacked Cromwell angrily, and tried every sort of trick in vain; till, rushing close in, he drew a dagger, and was about to plunge it into his foeman's heart. Cromwell saw the felon's purpose, and, snatching it from his hand, kicked the coward from the circle. A strong band of Roundheads now appeared, and freed the imprisoned champions.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE COURT OF CHARLES AND HENRIETTA.

"Ecco il diletto, la letizia e il giocco
Che aveano in odio il mondo or notte e giorno
Danzar per ogni calle ed ogni prato
Ride or la terra e il mare e in ciascuno loco
Sparge la ricca copia il pieno corno
O! lieta vita! o secolo beato!"

BERNADO TASSO.

WHEN the Alderman and the Fleming left Sir John Eliot, they found the highway of Westminster still thronged with all the stir and noise of an election. Some chariots and sedan-chairs of the gentry had ventured out: one of these, attended by many serving men, was pointed to with the whisper, "The Duke!"—and there surely was handsome, reckless Buckingham lolling in his chair, with glasses to his eye, amusing himself over the humors of the crowd, but not a little piqued at the defeat his nominee was sustaining. His face, naturally striking, was much bloated and darkened by a course of wanton dissipation. At length their attention was drawn from the Duke to a person standing behind his chair, wearing his gay livery, but who came forward to whisper to the great man, and looked full toward themselves. They recognized the Tutor, and comprehended that his presence boded no good to them. They at once sought to retreat among the crowd. Their way was barred by two well-dressed men, who accosted them: one of these, with much courtesy, begged the honor of a moment's attention; the other, scowling on them with his hand on his weapon, cried in a hoarse voice, "Halt!"

"Gentlemen," said the former, "I am commissioned by a great person to offer you country visitors in our good city guidance through this hurlyburly, and welcome to a place of quiet observation."

The other, seeing that they still advanced, threw himself in the way, affecting intoxication,—treading on their toes, and swearing angrily: "A murrain on ye!—won't hearken to a gentleman's civilities! Stop!—be advised."

The Fleming now firmly opposed himself, and said aloud, "Our way lies onward,—we have an engagement. We know you not, nor who sends you."

The crowd began to thicken, and many men said, "Best do the Duke's bidding, or you'll suffer for it. See! he comes this way." Thus warned, they looked back, and saw the Duke's chair in motion. The Fleming, knowing that other affairs made it needful he should escape, treated the ruffian as a mere drunkard, thrust him aside, and tried a stroke of strategy, shouting, "The Duke is passing!—room for the Duke!" At that cry all hurried forward, and the stream of people bore them along till they were opposite the Embassy, into the spacious porch of which they thankfully entered. Here they were welcomed, and were soon laughing with Herr Werter over the incident.

The Fleming left them a short time, and presently entered by another door as a fashionably dressed cavalier of the period, with long flowing curled periwig, laced ruffs, slashed sleeves, rich tunic, and hose of satin with embroidered lappets and front. A well-dressed lackey attended him, armed, and carried a *portefeuille*. For a moment the transformation deceived even his old friend Sherwood, and great was the mirth when the demure Dutchman was detected under the guise of a finished courtier.

Arriving at the Palace, Mijnheer Gezant Von Pauw at once entered the presence chamber, leaving his friend to await his summons in a crowded anteroom. In the large handsome gallery he saw persons of every quality, rather awaiting the appearance of the favorite than the call of the Sovereign, and more eager to see the lively Queen than her reserved and haughty husband. Here were officers of distinction, persons of high rank and fortune—the *crême de la crême* of Court fashion, with not a few elegantly dressed ladies, talking in low tones and with suppressed laughter. All this well-arrayed and consequential crowd was in motion, walking up and down in promenade, or lounging in the deep window recesses. Among them numbers of ecclesiastics were apparent,—few of the English Puritan clergy, but many of the new school, who in cut of dress and manner could hardly be distinguished from the Queen's Popish priests. The Fleming soon recognized some of the leading bankers of Lombard Street, and the princely merchants who at that time so largely upheld the English character for hospitality and honor among foreigners. He discussed with them the well-known necessities of the kingdom—the commercial politics of Europe—the probability of subsidies and contracts for the new war. They exchanged news of adventures beyond-sea,—in Dutch India, Virginia, and the Americas,—with a knowledge of the world's geography which was then almost confined to their class. They also talked of schemes for the liberal patronage of art and literature, and for the education of the ignorant people, together with magnificent asylums for the helpless. Perhaps no converse in that room could compare with that of this merchant group

in its elevated tone, although they were somewhat despised by the lisping and effeminate lordling as "wanting blood, and contaminated by trade, you know; only confounded rich, and with pretty daughters, you know."

A French priest now held forth on "the superiority of his Church as the true patron of art; and his mistress, Henrietta Maria as a woman of most perfect taste" . . . . when silence hushed every sound, and through a passage formed by the obsequious company the great Duke was seen, in magnificent apparel, bowing and addressing one and the other on his way to the presence-chamber. The worshipers bent forward as he passed, and gazed upon him as upon some idol. Yet in their hearts this hypocritical crowd envied and hated him very cordially, and would have hailed his disgrace and fawned upon his successor. The Duke spoke loudly and laughed affectedly. He played careless tricks—as twitching at a wide hat, pointing his stick at an open mouth, or laying hands on a bow or a ribbon of unusual length,—so treating the highest as inferiors. Pausing at a bevy of very dashing ladies who simpered as he approached, "Ah, my beauties," he softly lisped, "after the foul election riots you will hardly bear with us. Pray, are you for *puddings or pies?*"

They laughed as if he had said the wittiest thing, and one of them, May Lascelles, replied, "Villiers pies for me, and no Puritan pudding."

The Duke gazed boldly on her, and rejoined, "And when the pic was opened, Fair May began to sing,—and isn't that a dainty dish to set before a—nay, nay! I will quarrel even with the King for the dish that holds dainty May."

"But," said another—Flora Pierpoint—"you can't eat a whole pie!"

"Then the King shall help me!"—and they tittered together.

"But what will the Queen say?" rejoined May.

"Why, you know the Queen was in the parlor eating bread and honey, and leaving her singing birds to themselves," said the Duke.

"And the King," added Flora, "knew nothing about it, "for he was in his counting-house counting out his money."

"Happy man!" said Buckingham: "that must mean in his Parliament, where, let us hope, plenty of money will soon be counted out for us all."

"Bravo! bravo!" gently echoed many a needy courtier, as the gay prodigal of England, with his shameless effrontery, passed on.

The presence-chamber was then opened. The King was not present. The Queen, under a royal canopy and on the dais, looked very girlish and pretty, with a proud Austrian expression, and a face formed to express wild merriment, or the gusts of sudden passion. Behind her were her chief ladies—the Countess de la Tremouille (afterwards wife of Earl Derby), a commanding figure; and the Lady Gabrielle de Berghem, a sylph full of *espièglerie*, and of rare loveliness.

Our Fleming evidently found this young maiden so charming as to eclipse all the surrounding scene, and even when presented he nearly lost his turn from attending more to his heart than his manners. Moreover, when the Queen caught his name, she glanced at the fairy behind her, who ordered a page to desire the cavalier Van Diense to wait on Her Majesty after the drawing-room.

Instead, therefore, of passing out with the rest, he walked to one of the windows where sat a matron lady with whom he claimed acquaintance. His welcome was colder than he wished: "Monsieur, when did you arrive?"

"Only yesterday, my gracious lady. May I have the honor of asking after your daughter?"

"Gabrielle is here, and well. She will answer for herself. Have you the *entrée?*"

"Madam, I am commanded to await Her Majesty, having some commissions to receive."

The lady drew herself up slightly at the word *commissions*, and added, "I hope that Gabrielle and I too will soon be relieved from this post of durance, and this undesirable Court. The Marquis of Rochefoucault is eager to claim his betrothed."

"He is to be envied," replied the Fleming, with little obvious emotion; "but I heard he was with the Imperial troops."

"We expect him nevertheless," coldly replied the mother.

Just then the Lady Gabrielle herself flitted for a moment to her mother's side, and archly said, "So, mother! you set us girls a fine example. Brother Philip, I am glad to see you,—that is, sorry to see you at this Court, where is neither safety nor pleasure." Then the young lady yawned and laughed; and, giving her friends scarce time for rejoinder, she tripped back to her place of duty.

The attention of the assembly was just then drawn to some ancient dames of high degree who presented themselves in the costumes of the last age, with Elizabeth's ruff and farthingale, and with huge towers and funereal plumes nodding on their heads. As they approached the Queen—bowing and nodding—the spectacle was too much for the royal gravity, and she put up her fan to hide the uncontrollable mirth of her face. Yet more entertaining was it to see these affronted ladies turn away, and angrily refuse to be presented; there was an undeniable laugh at their expense. This insult was not forgotten in some high families; but it must in fairness be owned that when the royal cause was in jeopardy these ridiculed ones did not spare fortune or life in its service.

The Queen's procession filed out of the State chambers with some decorum; but the ladies soon began to yawn, and to chatter French; while they danced, sang, and sported like school-girls. The Queen did not hesitate to take her part in the diversion; and the gentlemen of the household freely joined in the mirth, till the noble halls and passages rang with their mad revelry. On reaching the Queen's own withdrawing-room, they were slightly subdued, and in reckless fashion they criticized every celebrated character and public party—running down whatever was English with undiscriminating spleen. The Queen was foremost in emphatic condemnation of all that was not French and Romish. She spared no one—not even her royal husband—passing from the broadest fun to passionate denunciation. She was in full flow of bitter displeasure against the French war; her arm outstretched, she was exclaiming, "Baby Charles has let Steenie befool him; but the French will thrash and drown his favorite," . . . . when there was a knock at the door, which opened to reveal the King and the Favorite, with their arms round each other like lovers, seeking admission.

"May we presume to enter, Marie, *ma chatte?*" said His Majesty.

The Queen started and stamped, saying to her ladies, "Arretez mechantes filles;" then turning to the King with ill grace: "Pourquoi ne m'avez vous pas averti. I have been doing your disagreeable work, and need some relaxation."

"Surely, Madame," resumed Charles, "your relaxation was something loud. I think we heard a kind wish that France should thrash us, and drown us in the sea. But such harmless recreations" . . . .

Here the Queen impetuously broke in, "No, Charles; you are sometimes bad to me, but I never spoke of your being thrashed or drowned; —not you, but" . . . . Here she looked full at the Duke, ready to launch the bolt at him.

But with much adroitness, seeing the awkward position, he interrupted, "Will my Royal Mistress allow?—she must be half dead with the long funereal procession. I heard something of a hearse and plumes which bore away some old ladies whom death has left too long, and who died in the rays of her splendor.—Pray, royal madame, allow us to aid in your recreation."

"Volontiers, mon ami et petit chien," said the Queen, turning at once from displeasure to amusement. So His Majesty's Court entered,—among whom were Lord Weston, the Treasurer, Archbishop Laud, and other distinguished men. All restraint was thrown off, and much familiarity of manner was indulged. The Queen was most diverting in her tricks and whimsical changes;—the King laughed as he never was seen to do elsewhere;—the Duke was paramount in such a scene,—arranging games, flirting, telling merry stories, sketching portraits of known characters, repeating and singing rather loose and comic songs, and with untiring flow of spirits keeping up the ball of lively frolic. Madame la Tremouille looked much diverted, but kept a distant place of her own. The Lady Gabrielle was full of life and wit, but no one ventured on a freedom with her —not even the Duke.

It was strange to see statesmen and ecclesiastics rather awkwardly bending to this mood; but Laud himself was a proficient in every courtly art, High Churchman though he was. As for the Mays, the Floras, and Evas, they gave the reins to pleasure and *abandon*, like a harem of wild playfellows. In one of these sallies they captured the Duke, and made him pay a costly ransom to the fair robbers by pilfering and appropriating the richest jewels with which his person was decorated; while the King and Queen and other spectators laughed extravagantly. What conversation passed was poor, and even interrupted by rough jibes and jests.

"You will not laugh so, Steenie," said His Majesty, "when the Pyms, Eliots, and Hampdens have you in their hands, and rifle you of your Spanish and French plunder."

"I shall then," replied the Duke, "have the help of their master. But ill-luck to you, Sire, for leaving me to these vixens' mercies."

"I know what I would do if I were King," interrupted the Queen.

"The patriot rascals," said Charles, "may thank their stars that you are not their sovereign! But what would you do, *ma mignonne?* —something very benevolent, no doubt."

"I would do as my ancestors did with the vile Huguenots," promptly replied the Queen, —"I would have them all shot. England would never miss them."

"But I cannot shoot members of Parliament without trial, Maria."

"You can if you will. *Allez poltron!*" she shrieked, half in rage and half in fun,—"*Allez poltron!* pull these cowards by the ears, or never see my face more!" at which explosion the whole chamber rang with laughter.

His Majesty tamely answered, "Go and pull their ears thyself, *ma chatte*,—you will find them plenty long enough."

The Queen held firmly to her point. "You are not half a king. Go down to their House, —go and threaten them roundly. Ah, Charles, you can go to war with my beloved France, but you cannot manage your own impertinent subjects. I could hate you all." Here she dashed away from her eyes tears of rage; then, in a new tone of triumph, she exclaimed, "I will change—I will go over to the Puritans; they will have me—the Queen, and Eliot—for peace. I will be popular, and you two shall go to the Tower."

"If you talk so madly," said the King, "we must have jolly old Bassompierre back again,—the only man living who can order you."

"And you also, *mon ami*. I see him bringing you down on both knees, to beg my pardon."

"Ask pardon, forsooth!" said His Majesty; "why, at our first dinner together at Canterbury, your confessor dared to tell you it was Lent, and you must eat no flesh. But you eat of it, nevertheless. What a life those ghostly fellows led us!"

"Ah, me!" said the Queen; "they were anxious to see me exposed to the snares of the enemies of the true faith,—me, a simple, virtuous child!"

"Why, said the King, greatly amused, "you are the very same frank maid, methinks, as when I first gazed curiously on you; for you lifted one of your *petits pieds*, and said sharply, 'Sir, I stand upon my own feet,—I have no helps of art,—I am neither higher nor lower, but only just thus high.' That little speech opened my heart to you."

"It hath been revealed to me, beloved," said the Duke, seeking to turn the subject, and snuffling in his voice to imitate the Puritans, "that the kitchen-house" (meaning the Commons) "hath obtained proofs that the arch-traitor Laud is seeking for himself and friends the carnal dignities of red hats and stockings, and other vain ornaments of the great Babylonish harlot." Then dropping the snuffle, he added, "I take it we are nearly all Papists, out of homage to our lovely Queen. Let us hear what hope Laud has of plastering up the ugly schism of the Reformation, and of making our nation respectable again in Europe."

To this challenge Laud replied, "Notwithstanding the old motto, 'Nec in ludis seria interveniunto,' I will try to satisfy his Grace's question. Rome will come more than halfway toward us. Let us but be firm,—bribe the ablest men opposed to us, and crush extreme praters; not by burning, for the smoke spreads heresy, but by using the pillory, scourge, and brand, with a few ears cropped and noses slit. Before such terrors their courage will ooze away. I will answer for religious submission, but I must have the power."

"Yes, Laud," interposed the monarch, with his most serious and earnest manner, "I agree with you—all Divine right of royal majesty rests upon religion. If we cannot have that

nobler, older religion which gives it the most solid support, we must still preserve such religion as is left us in the somewhat deteriorate Church of this realm. But the State stands or falls with the Church. My father's maxim, 'No bishop, no king,' was profound. Sooner will I lose my crown, or my head, than the authority of the Church shall be touched."

"I am not so sure," rejoined Her Majesty, "of your success, Charles, *mon ami*, for in France these folk have survived a good deal of scourging and cropping. . . . But this is sad and evil talk. Ladies, give us some madrigals."

Very lovely was the music which soon thrilled the air from some of the Italian, French, and even English masters, admirably executed in several parts. The Lady Gabrielle had a flexible and cultivated voice, with a delicious expressiveness. To the Fleming this was the only really delightful part of this Court appearance. He stood riveted by inspiration as the gently rising and falling waves of modulation thrilled his soul, and specially as he followed with an inner spirit-tie the flowing trill of one voice which dominated the rest.

The party now began to break up, and the gentlemen paid their final compliments to the ladies.

The Fleming seized an opportunity to address his lady,—"Gabrielle, have you forgotten Brussels, and our childhood?"

"It will be always a charming childish romance, Philip; but it is far behind; and, alas! now I am but a courtier enamored of the pleasures of Egypt."

"But you cannot like this life?"

"Not all of it, my friend; but I am fit for no other. Rank and riches are essential to me."

"You may pay too dear even for them," said the Fleming.

"But we shall always be friends?" she said, engagingly.

"Always," replied he, with a quiet face lit up by a flash of sunshine.

All the Queen's company having retired, she turned round on Van Diense with the command, "Now my trusty messenger and man of affairs, have you French dispatches—news from my dear Paris, for which I have been dying? And have you fresh patterns of your wonderful cloth-vestures? Donnez-les moi vite? The Fleming knelt, and handed a large packet of letters, which he waited for Her Majesty to open. This she did with characteristic haste, and read them commenting aloud on their contents. "Vraiment! scoldings for letting my husband go to war! Why, I went on my knees and wept!—I, a Medici! Good—I thought so: Rochelle must fall, in spite of Steenie and Soubise. Gustavus Adolphus is driven back by ours—marchons; and the Pope has had a Te Deum—wish I had been there. Sister Anne has had a bad time—ora pro nobis. Yes, I am to do all the priests tell me, and never listen to heresy. Would I were back in France!—only the King—Charles—he surely begins to love. I too begin—ah, well!"—and with a sigh not wholly sad she closed her perusual. Rapidly changing her mood, she exclaimed, "Now for the braveries! Ladies, come and see! Tremouille shall be umpire, Gabrielle be the defendant's counsel." Then were unfolded, amid screams of delight and surprise, some of the new effects in woven patterns of arras and tapestry. Some time elapsed in admiration and judgment, while many large orders were given. At last it was time for the Queen to dress. "Farewell," said she, "Master Dutchman;—be sure you return again ere long with still finer things, for we are soon to have money and peace."

Suddenly she stopped near the door, and, stamping her foot, cried out, "Thou'rt sure, fellow, that these wares of yours have never been seen in Paris or Madrid?—else our orders are null and void."

"Your Majesty," replied the Fleming, "may be very sure I would never affront you with the leavings of other Courts." The Queen extended her hand for him to kiss, as token of reconciliation, and he quitted her rooms with his obeisance.

The Fleming found that the Ambassador had been compelled to leave. He put on a large Spanish cloak, and drawing the hood over his head, prepared to make his way on foot. The night was stormy, but he sped on, chiefly thinking of his lady love — of her fair looks and graceful movements, of the sweet accents of her singing, and of her last friendly words. Suddenly he was seized from behind, and, in spite of all his resistance, was dragged into a chariot which drove rapidly away.

CHAPTER XV.

BISHOP WREN AND HIS CLERGY.

"Those that go up hill use to bow
Their bodies forward and stoop low:
So those at Court that do address
By low ignoble offices,
Can stoop at anything that's base
To wriggle into trust and grace,
Are like to rise to greatness sooner
Than those who go by worth and honor."
BUTLER.

SOME time after those events in Norwich which were last narrated, the good Rector of St. George's was seated in his study preparing for his morning work. He had dispatched various callers, who were often sore hindrance to his literary habits, and looked fondly round on the select stock of large heavy volumes—chiefly folios—which formed his library. A Fellow of Emmanuel College would be sure to have the chief classics of the Greek and Latin tongues: there were also many of the works of the Church Fathers—Justin, Chrysostom, Origen, Eusebius, and Augustine,—all well read and turned over. Nor were the reasoners and mystics of the mediæval schoolmen wanting. Of the Reformers were included the works of Luther and Calvin, Erasmus, Wycliffe, Tyndale, Latimer, and the divines of Henry VIII. and Elizabeth. There were also copies of Shakspeare, Spenser, Chaucer, More's Utopia, and more modern volumes—sacred and secular. These were the friends of his quiet hours. Before the Rector there lay on his writing-desk the sheets of a work which he was preparing on "The Spiritual Actings of Faith through Natural Impossibilities," a work with a long and grave title, but full of holy maxims, illustrated in quaint and fitting figures, and capable of excellent application in any age. [*This work has survived to our day, having been commended by a preface from the illustrious Countess of Huntingdon, and being now republished by one of our modern literary and religious societies under the title "Bridge on Faith."*—Editor's note.] In this book Bridge expounds the faith of Abraham, showing how "God first sets the seal of death on the blessing, and on all natural ways of obtaining it, and then calls His children, nevertheless, to trust in Him, and to seek it,—whereupon true saving faith carries the soul through all difficulties." Such a faith was indeed needful in those times for himself and those who acted with him; and very nobly they proved their possession of it.

As our Rector was gravely finishing a paragraph of his work, Alice appeared at the door to read her morning lesson with her father, who guided her chief studies.

"Well, my love, is your lesson ready?" said her father, with a smile which her presence always elicited. "Are Cæsar's sentences very hard and tough to-day? You know you made him cut off his own head in yesterday's translation."

Alice was too preoccupied to laugh, but with seriousness said, "Father, do you know that the Bishop has posted on all the church doors an order to have only one sermon on Sundays, and to put an end to all our pleasant lectures?"

"Indeed, my darling, is it so? I feared it would come. We must obey, and leave the issue to God."

"But, father, Ann says this is not the end, since Will Barnard told her that the men who put up the notice joked about it, saying, 'The parson would soon have notice to quit, and the sooner the better for a long-eared Puritan as he was.' The people were very angry, but dared not interfere. Mother says we may have to suffer like the good people in Mary's time, and to leave our homes and churches and fly abroad. Dear father, can this be? I couldn't leave this dear house where I was born, and the old church, and little sister's grave, and Norwich friends, and all!" Here the lassie fairly broke down, and sank into her father's arms, who quieted her as he inwardly prayed for strength to nerve this young heart, now throbbing wildly at the first swell of life's trials.

"But, Alie dear," he said, "if it were God's will—not that I really expect it—we should go together, many friends with us, and wait for better times to return."

"But, father, we might be put in prison, like dear Lucy Graves; or we might die in crossing the sea, or never, never come back! Oh, I don't like it." Here her mother, hearing the noise of crying, came to her relief, and succeeded by her caresses in quieting her troubled heart.

"Now, Alie," said her father, "you will have no mind for Cæsar's camps and battles with his Gallic foes,—so go for a walk with Ann or your mother, and come back."

The door opened, and in rushed the Rev. John Allen in evident excitement, saying, "Bridge, the evil day is coming!—these Papist imitators will bring the English Church down to her ruin, and——"

"Hold, hold!" cried Bridge; "my wife is going for a walk—excuse me a moment." So soon as the ladies had departed, Bridge begged his friend's pardon for checking his revelations.

"I am, however, in sad earnest," returned Allen; "our Bishop will not only stop all Gospel work, but he will bind the clergy in a servile subjection. A new declaration against Calvinism is to be signed on pain of severe fines. The benevolence which Laud exacted from us for the King is to be increased. The sentences passed on some of us for not preaching the Divine right of kings before the election are to be enforced. Very soon our incomes will be reduced to starvation-point."

"This is surely rumor and not reality," said Bridge. "I will submit and pay fines as long as I can, but I will not sign anything which I believe to be wrong."

"I am almost ready to despair of England, and to take ship for Holland, where our old neighbor Kirby finds abundant liberty."

"Brother," replied Bridge, "we must not lay down our office nor break our vows without some imperative reasons. We should only open our pulpits and parishes to Jesuits who are waiting the opportunity."

Allen rejoined, "Let us go and face the Bishop and discover the truth, for suspense is horrible."

"I will go with you," replied his friend; "but let our words be moderate."

They called at the Palace, and found the Bishop alone. After brief salutations, Allen asked "if all Gospel preaching was to be forbidden save on Sabbath mornings."

"Yes, as a rule it is," answered Bishop Wren with hesitation. "There will be exceptions and dispensations; but the practice has been abused."

"Must I silence my worthy lecturer," said Bridge, "who has a church crowded in the afternoon with weavers and Pocthorpe fellows, who never entered a church before, but used to beat their drums outside, and fling dirt on the church-goers?"

"Decorate your service, and have plenty of music and processions," argued the Bishop, "and still more will crowd in."

"Not of that sort, my lord," was the reply; "their hunger is too deep to be satisfied by sweet sounds and pretty colors. But, my lord, is it true that a declaration against Calvinism is expected of the clergy?"

"I believe so," faltered Wren; "that is, not exactly so—not against Calvinism, but explaining the harsher doctrines of that school."

"Pray, my lord," said Allen, "may we decline to sign it?—for how else can we preserve our assent to our Articles and Homilies, which are full of Calvinism?"

"Surely, surely," replied his lordship. "No force is intended—no conscience will be violated; only the Church must work in harmony."

"Then I fear," said Bridge, seeing with pain Father Christopher glide in, with a look as if this meeting in his absence was a dire offense, "our refusal might subject us to penalty."

His lordship now stiffened himself on his seat, and said, "My clergy have had too much liberty and indulgence. There must be governance of the superior order, and due submission of the inferior, however painful to enforce. No doubt you may subject yourselves to peril if you are unruly. Therefore be warned."

"In order to such submission," replied Bridge, "the rules laid down must be just and scriptural."

"Do you dare to infer," sternly interposed the Chaplain, "that his lordship's rules are not so? If so, we shall know how to bridle a rebellious spirit."

"We are here," replied Bridge, "simply to inquire whether the Protestant clergy are to be constrained into acts and utterances contrary to their convictions."

"Individual conviction," replied the Churchman, "must always yield to legitimate authority. Our Articles say, 'The Church hath power to decree rites and ceremonies.'"

"But they also declare," rejoined Bridge, "that these decrees must be 'such as are proven out of the Scripture.'"

"And who is to be the arbiter and interpreter of Scripture?" angrily asked the Chaplain.

Bridge answered, "Am I to pretend to believe that black is white because some priest or Council tells me so? My senses and reason are given me for use, and I am responsible to God for the right use of them."

"But you are responsible to the Church, and to your Ordinary as its representative. Forgive me, your lordship, when your office is attacked, if I interpose to defend it. The clergy have been irregular and irresponsible. It is time to gather up the reins of discipline, and, together with fatherly persuasion, to use the pressure of authority for the common good. We have the power, and we mean to employ it. Does your lordship favor my poor justification?"

"Undoubtedly; and I pray my brethren to take it into serious consideration. The Church law must be defined and obeyed: the clergy must set the example of submission, or we are but a rabble of fanatics. Farewell, brethren;—none will be spared, and those least who act as ringleaders of mischief."

Thus harshly dismissed with menace and hatred, our Churchmen departed, sore at heart, with apprehension for the evil plainly coming on the Church and the kingdom. Bridge walked home slowly, thinking of his projected work on the "Spiritual Actings of Faith through Natural Impossibilities." This problem had suddenly entered into his own life. "God reigneth over all," he whispered as he entered his own home.

Just then faithful Ann arrived, full of troubles of another sort, which she poured out to her mistress. Matters at Castle Meadow were in a bad train, and Ann was sensitive of affairs of the heart. "You see, madam," she exclaimed, "Master Gerhardt was crazy after that lightsome lass Fanny, though she is not worthy of him. All was settled for their speedy marriage, when that vile Tutor, whom I never could abear, appeared in the city. Well, he hovered about the Fleming's house—not from love to the girl, but from pure mischief. To do her justice, I believe Fanny hates him; and I thought, after Gerhardt's beating, he would have left her alone. But he has got his revenge, for the marriage is broken off; and poor Fanny—I must pity her—is ready to die of grief."

The case was even more pitiful than Ann's relation. Fanny's mother was slowly fading away, and her father, in his old age, was sitting at home and moping, while people shook their heads and said, "Old Reason Why will soon know the mystery." Fanny went frequently to comfort this miserable pair, and the wicked Green contrived to waylay and to join her more than once, in spite of all her denials. Of this Gerhardt at last heard by officious friends, and set his weaver-boys to watch them. Instead of warning Fanny, and speaking out, he let matters take their course, and had fresh reports daily brought to him, which made him utterly savage toward both parties. Gerhardt at first doggedly doubted, and then turned round and ordered his men to catch the villain, and duck him in a horse-pond, and drive him out of the city. The disappearance of the criminal, however, prevented this catastrophe, and so the whole storm fell on poor Fanny's head. Gerhardt sent his sister to inform Mistress Hannchen of all he knew, and of his resolve to break with Fanny entirely. The distress of the poor girl was intense, while she maintained her perfect innocence. Nothing, however, could move the obstinate Dutchman, who was as wretched as herself. Fanny was soon left an orphan, with no provision but the offer of her aunt—a respectable farmer's wife living at Dereham—to give her a home. Before Fanny left, Dame Bridge most kindly, though vainly, tried her influence over Gerhardt. "Try her again, madam!" said he; "how can you ask it? You say she weeps. Oh, she is a painted piece of deception! Fool that I am to love her still; but I can't believe in her repentance,—'Nothing dries sooner than tears.'"

Poor Fanny, looking pretty in her mourning dress, and sensible still of her personal power over her lover, faltered out, "If he would only see me! Poor Gerhardt! I am sorry for him—I know he can't be happy. If he did but see me in all my sorrow" (here she gave a little conscious look in a mirror opposite), "I'm sure he would not let me go away to strangers. How could I prevent that base man from speaking to me?—I that held myself as good as married! If I had told Gerhardt about him, there would have been fighting, and perhaps murder; and so I am to suffer for it, and lose the comfortable home he offered me. And oh, I have no mother now!" She could hold up no more, but falling into kind Hannchen Van Diense's arms, sobbed in silence. So Fanny vanished from Norwich, and went to her Dereham aunt.

CHAPTER XVI.

STEENIE AT HOME.

"A man so various, that he seemed to be
Not one, but all mankind's epitome.
Stiff in opinions; always in the wrong;
Everything by starts, but nothing long;
But in the course of one revolving moon
Was chemist, fiddler, statesman, and buffoon;
Then all for women, painting, rhyming, drinking,
Beside ten thousand freaks that died in thinking.
Beggared by fools, whom such he found, too late,—
He had his jest, and they had his estate."
DRYDEN.

VAN DIENSE, when his eyesight was recovered from the bandage which had for some time impeded vision, found himself in a large nobly-furnished chamber, at the farther end of which by a large fire stood a tall, richly-dressed man, whom he at once recognized as the Duke of Buckingham. As he approached, in the custody of retainers, the Duke politely met him with the greeting, "Will Herr Van Diense excuse a stratagem by which he has suffered only a brief detention? I am so dreaded a monster, that I am driven to use force even to win friendly speech where I bear no enmity. We are not strangers, sir, and my consciousness of your great ability makes me anxious to confer with you."

"I am sensible, your Grace, of the high compliment, but I should have myself invited the interview in a less romantic way. I suppose there is some matter which has given rise to your Grace's rather pressing hospitality to me."

"Why, then, did you shun me this morning?" asked the Duke.

"Because there was in your Grace's attendance and livery one whom I knew in another character—as a spy, a Jesuit, and a traitor."

"Pshaw!—you mean little Green, my valet. I find it useful, however, to employ all sorts of tools."

"Treachery, your Grace, is double-edged. Beware of that little creeping varlet."

"I will. But what papers are these you have launched on our London ocean of political fluctuation?"

"Some might hesitate to unbosom so freely to a courtier, my lord Duke, but my diplomacy ever consists in plain-dealing."

Said the Duke, with a shrug, "That is a very rare article, though much talked of. In most mouths I should take such a profession as mere cant the better to deceive."

"I am well aware of your Grace's skeptical habit; yet no one can deal more plainly if it suits you."

The Fleming proceeded to explain the Papal commissions, and their effect.

"Why did you not bring these wares first to my market?" was the Duke's observation. "You would have gained a better price for them here."

"Your Grace knows me, better than most, to be no mere trafficker, but of rank and birth not inferior to your own."

"I know it well," admitted Buckingham, "and esteem you the more. For birth, you may well surpass mine; and all the world knows my rise to be due to royal partiality during two reigns. A king's toy may fall as rapidly as he rises. But tell me,—think you, is not our Archbishop right in bringing the Churches together? Why should we Protestants stand out against all antiquity and all Europe, and make ourselves generally ridiculous and disagreeable?"

"For at least two very sufficient reasons, my lord, in my judgment: because Rome is not serious in her overtures of peace, but only uses them as poisoned weapons against us; and because matters have gone too far in England ever to lure the body of the people back to the old yoke which they have cast off."

Buckingham retorted, "You Puritans are so narrow and strict! Were I one of you, how could I live?—where would be my luxuries and *menus plaisirs?* The Court would become a dull conventicle; the play-houses would be closed; all dancing, singing, games, and pastimes would be condemned; all joking and flirtation would be deadly sins; even painting and poetry and romances would be prohibited. How in the world could a Court exist so? Now the old Church is lenient to human frailties, and indulges these cravings of nature. A man of the world sets light by these devices of priestcraft. Of course there must be a code of virtue and a mythology of some sort for every race and tribe—it little matters what; but the wise look behind the scenes, and consider all alike to be mere dramatic performances of actors more or less skilled in their parts, and all alike equally unreal in essence."

"On this subject I utterly differ from your Grace," the Fleming said with a sad earnestness, "but I will not argue on it now. Let me only tell you for what I was about to seek an interview with you, had you not thus constrained me."

Buckingham answered at once, "I always pride myself on obeying the precept 'Audi alteram partem.' I have communications with Puritan and Papist, King and Commons, statesmen and traders, honest men and roysterers,—yea, even bravoes, spies and villains. Shall I refuse to hear a true counselor like you?"

"Thank your Grace; and would you only take some heed, and not allow the better voice to be drowned, you, and England too, might be all the better. Seriously, my lord, your own life is in imminent jeopardy."

"So I am always being told. Talk not of life, for whatever my faults, I am no coward."

"I would not attempt to warn you, my lord Duke, but that I have some hope of persuading you to a bold change which would be a national benefit."

"Say on,—I like bold courses."

"My lord, you have cut to the quick the pride of two of the greatest Courts in Europe, and they both see that your life only stands in the way of their plans. Spain thirsts to avenge your slights on Donna Maria, the Infanta; and France hates you as on the side of her Huguenots. Assassins are on the lookout for any favorable occasion which your rashness may easily afford. Look, your Grace, at this extract from the French Queen-mother: 'Your coxcomb Minister will not long live to trouble us. Spain and ourselves are at one on this matter, and it is hard if we cannot fit him with a coffin.' Perhaps you know her writing?"

"Perfectly; and that does not surprise, much less alarm me. I am aware of these kind intentions, but that only makes me more valuable to my country."

"Would you only, Duke, win the confidence of the Commons' leaders—would you dissuade the Court from its mad opposition to every English custom—you would gain a popularity worth more than a monarch's favor."

"But such a course, Master Van Diense, would be a certain breach with the Court, and there, at least, I have sure footing."

"Be not too certain of that, my lord; reliance on a king's favor in times of extremity is but slippery ground. However dangerous to myself, I must let you see another extract,—you know the hand well,—Charles himself writing to his French mother-in-law: 'You are angry with Steenie. Well, he was mad, or worse;—but our sister was armed in her charming virtue,—and he suffered disgrace. You think he guides me into war; I tell you, my will is firm enough. My wife has most power over me: she naturally dislikes a favorite. I cannot throw him over all at once. He is making me odious to my people: have patience, and he will vanish. What matters a minion the less?'"

Buckingham read this carefully, and coldly observed, "I dare say he wrote so; but I know him too well: he is a clever dissembler—it was his cue. To him, personal relations are everything, but broad and patriotic ones nothing. He may give up his best statesman, but not his intimate and favored friend. Yet he is not easier to manage than that old conceited, obstistinate owl, his father. Have you heard that the doctors, when they had to embalm his body, reported that 'his skull was so strong they could hardly open it with a chisel and saw, and so full of brains that they could not keep them from spilling?' which they said was 'a proof of his infinite judgment.' More likely it proved his brain to be mixed with infinite water."

"Ah, then I see," the Fleming replied with disappointment, "your Grace will follow your own course to the end,—warned and doomed,

I fear. Look at this placard taken from the walls this morning:

'Who rules the kingdom?—The King!
Who rules the King?—The Duke!
Who rules the Duke?—The Devil!
Let the Duke look to it, or he will be served as Lambe his Doctor was served!
Let Charles and George do what they can,
The Duke shall die like Dr. Lambe!'

My lord, be warned in time, and change this perilous policy for a patriot service, to which you often seem inclined."

The Duke seemed moved, and gave a hand to his visitor, saying, "Beshrew me, but I think you are my best counselor. Alas! 'Meliora probo deteriora sequor' must be my epitaph, I fear." As they were parting, the Duke said, "Count Arenberg, I trust the time may come for your talents and fidelity to be applied to public affairs. By the by, how do you stand with your friend Gabrielle?—the only star at Court, save cold Tremouille, who has never been eclipsed."

"Very flattering words," said the Fleming. "She is betrothed to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, who is soon coming for her."

"Nonsense,—that's her dragon mother's desire. He is a *roué*, like many of us, and cannot pretend to such a paragon. Gabrielle has a free heart with just a *penchant* for you; but she is rather skittish and uncertain for a wise man to trust. Your families were, I think, closely connected in Holland. You were dispossessed—was it not so?—in the Spanish persecution. Her French mother does not smile on the Dutch connection, I fancy."

"Your Grace is excellently informed, and I pretend to no more than simple friendship," was the sad response.

"Well, Van Diense, one good turn deserves another. You have warned me faithfully: I hope I can serve you. I am in communication with the French and Spanish ambassadors; and I expect ere long, by the discovery of special papers in the Paris archives, you will be restored to your native rank and possessions."

"My lord Duke, your unsolicited and powerful aid weighs me down with gratitude;—I never can forget it, whether I succeed or not. Would that you would give some weight to my poor warnings, and reconsider your own line of policy, for the sake of England and her King."

"If I must say so to you—my old dad, Jamie, was more pliable than Charles" (here he sank his voice to a whisper), "who would walk right over the deepest precipice only to prove that he will have his own way. He is incorrigible! Possibly I am doomed; but hell could hardly be worse than my position of late in this Court. Farewell."

In one of his most splendid *salons* the Duke gave that night a supper to the *jeunesse dorée* of that period Wits, dandies, men of fashion and of profligate habits, with the noted actresses and ladies not admissible to real society, made a *mélange* of joyous *abandon*. The jovial mirth, free license, and excellent wines and dishes, had prolonged the entertainment till the Duke, who seemed the least weary of the party, gave the signal of breaking up. He and Sir Charles Sedley—his *fidus Achates*—were lingering alone a few minutes, when his Grace yawned and said, "Sedley, every night I resolve to end my wretched life, but while considering the better mode of dispatch I fall asleep, and on waking the fit is over, and I find something to revenge, oppose, or attain, which brings me through the day. But this night I really think I shall do it."

"I knew a man, George," returned his friend, "who was always thinking he was dying, and in the night he frequently sent a servant on horseback for the doctor, until one night this servant sulkily replied, 'I wish you'd fix a time, sir, and keep it.'"

"Thanks, Charles, for your valuable advice;—I will take it, and pin on my coat this note, 'Sir Charles Sedley advised me to this.'"

"Well, George, do as you will; but I do advise you never to be at the trouble of laying hands on yourself when you have so many foes ready on slight occasion to save you the disagreeable task."

"At all events, I am half a mind, Charles, to turn Puritan, and spite this treacherous Court."

"Are they worse, Villiers, than the other party? Look before you leap."

"I have sure proof to-day, friend, that both King and Queen would give me up to France."

"Probably," said Sedley coldly,—"if they dared, they would. You are master. What boys' school would not gladly flog or flay a tyrannical master, if they dared?"

"But to go on aping the friend and simpering the courtier is hideous."

"'Tis only the courtier's lot, George. How many would change with you? You must play on your part boldly, Duke; you must keep your mastery. If you falter, you are lost."

"Then, if I cannot save England from the tyrant and his insatiable Court, I will steer the vessel full on the iron-bound coast, and we will all perish together on the rocks of destiny."

"Very well," laughed his friend, "unless you are first tripped up and cast over. I prefer to perish among the Syrens of the Straits. May your Grace enjoy blissful dreams, and postpone dying till the morrow!" So they waved their courteous farewells.

On the basement floor of the same palace, many of the Duke's household had been holding their orgies in imitation of their betters. Three of these were remaining after the feast, for last words. They were the ruffling bravo already named; a military-looking friend of his, Captain Felton, a desperate-visaged man; and thirdly, our quondam acquaintance the valet Green.

"I hear," said the last, addressing Felton, "that you have a petition of grievance for our Duke. Is it of pressing moment?"

"Pressing indeed," croaked the other, his voice trembling with excitement. I have been horribly wronged, and unless I get justice I will right myself with my own hand."

"Hush!" said the bravo. "Things not to speak, but to do. Curse them all!"

"But," asked Green, "our Duke is no enemy of yours?—he has done you no wrong?"

"Not yet, perhaps,—not till he refuses me. Only let him!"

"Which he surely will do," said the bravo. "He is cursed impatient—he is like to kick you rather. He has done so to me, and to Green there."

"Pshaw!" whispered Green. "If I were his enemy, I could soon settle my score. France and Spain would reward the act well."

"Say you so?" cried the bravo. "I have done his dirty work, and eaten his bread, but I hate him. He has affronted my honor,—that I never forgive. I could run this dagger to the hilt."

"Hush!" rejoined Felton: "this is brag. I want no reward. I care not to save my own life. I shall be avenged!"

Green then clapped Felton on the shoulder, and said, "Bravo!—we two will find you an opportunity; but if his Grace be hasty, promise us to be patient."

"Patient!—not I. Let him ask that above; let him look to the issue. He won't boast over me long."

"Ah!" answered crafty Green; "we are all heated just now. Farewell for to-night. Our master is a good master, though we grumble sometimes."

After Felton retired, the other two waited, and, looking at each other, laughed very meaningly, when Green said, "That fellow is primed and loaded."

"No need for that," said the other. "Murder is written in his face, and madness too. Well, I shall be rid of this cursed Duke's bloody errand. 'Tom,' says he, 'settle with so-and-so,' and again with so-and-so; and he gives money for blood. He has the gentleman-coward's part, and I the butcher's. Perhaps he will feel the butchery in turn. Curse him! But, Green,—about that reward?"

Green replied, "I have no part in this matter. I will surely commend you for reward when the *coup* is struck. Now I must be ready for my attendance—perhaps for blows and kicks; but the trap is set, and the victim ready."

As Green ascended the great stairs, he muttered, "Not long shall I endure this intolerable insolence. Father Christopher offers largely from his foreign employers for the Duke's end; therefore he helped me here. This Felton wants no wages: he will die, and reveal nothing. As for this bravo, he is an ass, and a small bundle of hay and thistle will content him. Yes, vile Villiers will soon lie lower than he has ever degraded his servants. Not long, my Prince of Bucks! disgrace of dukes! and dupe of devils!"

CHAPTER XVII.

THE FLEMING'S LOVE.

"Love was given,
Encouraged, sanctioned, chiefly for that end;
For this the passion to excess was driven,
That self might be annulled—her bondage prove
The fetters of a dream, opposed to love."
WORDSWORTH.

Our Norwich travelers spent the next few days in calling on various friends. The Alderman saw his lordly brethren of London, and enjoyed a banquet at the Lord Mayor's mansion, which was a house greatly overloaded with heavy architectural ornament. The Fleming had much business with the Dutch merchants then adventuring in India, as also in aiding to found the Massachusetts Bay Company, and opening the colonial traffic with America.

The friends went together to see the boys at school. Dr. Osbaldeston was yet more courteous, and conversed freely on public matters. Referring to the boys, the Doctor praised them both, alluding specially to the frank courage of George. Edward he called highly honorable, but reserved, and disposed to side with the Court and High Church party, having a boyish fancy for the Queen and the new Popish fashions.

When the boys appeared, the Principal left the party to perfect freedom. After embraces and minor questions, the Alderman asked, "What friends have you picked up here?"

George named Richard Eliot and young Hampden, with a younger Vane, and added, "We had an election at school, in which John Eliot (eldest son of Sir John) and the eldest Hollis stood against a son of Lord Weston and a nephew of Laud. We did work hard for votes."

"And which side beat?" asked the Fleming.

"Ah!" cried Edward, breaking silence, "we beat, though they called us Papists and Steenie's dogs!—we beat!"

"But were you not on the same side?" said their father.

"No," answered Edward sadly; "I went with my friend Wren and Bishop Williams's son, whom George calls Bishops' spawn."

"But, my dear boys, you should hold together as you used to do at home."

"So we do, father," replied George; "only at an election one divides for fun. But I wish Edward did not like that mischievous fellow, Stephen Wren."

"No more mischievous than Richard Eliot, the pale-faced idiot," cried Edward.

"Yes! so our old tutor, Green, advises you," rejoined his brother.

"What have you to do with that man?" said both their astonished visitors in anxiety.

Edward answered, "He only comes to see Wren; and though old Baldy would not like it, he contrives somehow to get admittance."

"Have as little as possible to do with him, Edward."

"He tells us about the Court," replied Edward, "and the great Duke; and about the Queen and her beautiful ladies, Eva and Flora, and the fair Gabrielle; and they send us presents and ribbons."

"Yes," said George bitterly, "and for them you forget all your old friends—even Alice."

"No, I don't," said Edward; "but you are taken up with your Eliots and Vanes, and this troublesome new Parliament, which I would like silenced, so that King and Queen might rule, as God meant them to do."

"Why, Edward, you have learnt a great deal in a short time! Ought not the King to take the advice of a Parliament when he has called it? Would you wish your own father, and Alice's father, to be fined and lodged in prison, as they certainly would be if the wish you express were fulfilled?"

"Nay, sir, I love father, and all of you, as much as George; but I never heard about the King's troubles before, and I am sorry for them," stammered Edward, with tears in his eyes.

"Boys," said his father, "beware of severing from each other. Do not think you can understand these State matters, which puzzle your elders. Get on with your school learning, and, please God, when you come home, we can talk of these things together."

"Father," said George, "we shall be all right. Edward's as good as gold, and like to be one of the first scholars, if it weren't for this Tutor, who tries to influence and sever us. We are quite happy, and very good friends in the main."

"That we are," cordially rejoined Edward, with his old brightness; and so the interview ended. The Alderman seemed to accept this issue, or to hide his uneasy thoughts; but the Fleming could not help discerning "the little rift in the lute," and fearing that a beginning was laid for the division already rending English society by weaning from each other these affectionate brothers.

The Fleming took occasion to call at the Queen's side of the Palace, and ask if any instructions awaited him. He was ushered, as he had hoped, into a private chamber where were Gabrielle and her mother, both rather preoccupied and ceremonious. After some formal messages regarding the royal wants and orders, the Fleming begged to know if he could have the honor of doing anything abroad for these ladies. The mother replied that they were desirous of quitting England soon themselves. A cold and tedious conversation ensued, almost in monosyllables, constantly threatening to cease, and reopening with effort, until at last the mother remembered some business which called her away.

Finding himself free from restraint, the Fleming then approached his fair mistress, saying, "Does Gabrielle accept this French settlement?—I can hardly believe or endure it."

The young lady lifted her face with a mischievous expression, and replied, "What else am I to do, Philip? Wait till the Dutch Companies are dissolved, and my earlier knight puts off his russet jerkin, and arrives *cap-à-pie* to rescue me?"

"Oh, Gabrielle, throw not yourself away!—if not for my sake, at least for your own. This Duke de Rochefoucauld whom they talk of—— but I will not malign even him. Ask Buckingham what he is, and he will say too like himself. Can you love him—can you endure such a lot?"

"And what is the alternative?" pouted the lovely girl. "Am I, the butterfly, to come down and mate myself with the hedgehog or the snail?"

"Thanks for the comparison, lady!—but perchance the snail would leave his shell, and find wings to meet the butterfly, did she only call him to her side."

She playfully retired a few steps, in a sort of dancing measure, and then returned again with an airy grace, and said, "Philip, I always liked you, and do so now. You have saved me from many evils—none worse than those of this Court. But I am not good enough for you; after all, I am only a Court flutterer. I love this Queen, who is very kind to me. I despise the Duke, and his cold haughty master. I know the devilry which haunts this place. Yet I am a worldling, proud of my rank, and of courtly admiration and incense; fond of ceaseless luxury and mirth. I shrink from all that is coarse and low bred." Here she again went off in a sort of dance, going and returning, fixing bright eyes on her guest, which were as fiery arrows of love in the center of his heart. Then pausing once more, she continued, "I could not do it—that's the honest truth. 'Tis against my nature,—though I like you so much, and am so grateful to you. Yet don't ask me to make the sacrifice. I might not be able to resist, but I am not fit for it yet."

"YET—YET!" echoed the Fleming with a gleam of joy; "then I may wait and hope?"

"And be a fool for your pains!" said the laughing lady; and then, clear as a lark, she trilled out Suckling's verses:

"But love is such a mystery,
I cannot make it out;
For when I think I'm best resolved,
I then am most in doubt."

The Fleming listened in a sort of rapture, but waking from it, he sighed and answered:

"'Give me more love or more disdain:
The torrid or the frozen zone
Bring equal ease unto my pain;
The temperate affords me none.
Either extreme of love or hate
Is sweeter than a calm estate.'

Farewell, dear lady. I will live awhile upon 'yet,' and hourly wish your happiness, though it were at the expense of my own."

"Nay," replied she, "I forbid it. Dear Philip, give me up. I dismiss you. Go and be happy your own way. I am not made for that way. Some one will be richly happy in your noble heart; but there is a lofty strain in it—I know not what—that frets and mortifies me too keenly for happiness. Farewell, my good friend!"

Long after midnight, our hero was making his way home, when he saw a crowd gathered in the road around a handsome chariot. A band of wild roysterers—aristocratic youths, masked and half-drunk, such as infested the streets at nightfall, calling themselves *Roaring Blades*, or *Hellfire Ruffians*, and who took liberties with all passers-by, had stopped this carriage to indulge the pleasure of admiring and terrifying the beauties it contained. He saw some of these rude fellows, with their wild songs, their naked swords, and flashing torches, drag from the open door a shrinking lady whom they were forcing to dance a measure with them on the public pavement. Roused by this lawless spectacle, the Fleming looked anxiously for the watch, and called one of the sleepy constables to blow his horn and summon his fellows. The Fleming's movements were quickened by catching sight of a white figure too familiar, and hearing the cry of a voice he could not mistake. It was his Gabrielle and her mother who were being thus wickedly abused. It was the work of a moment to rush into the midst, sword in hand, to dash back the half-intoxicated *roués*, to reseat the ladies in the shelter of their carriage, and to close the door, as he heard her say, "Oh! Philip, thanks,—but care for yourself!" Then, turning to the people, he said, "The lady is my friend—one of the Queen's maids of honor. Who will stand by me for a rescue?" The rioters prepared to assail the solitary champion who had so impetuously interfered with their pleasures. A few stout passers-by, however, ranged themselves on his side in defense of law and female security.

The fight was very severe. The rioters and the crowd were a multitude, and the defenders but a thin line of brave men encompassed on every side by furious foes. Some were severely wounded on both sides, and the clash of weapons and yells of angry war filled the thoroughfare. Hitherto the Fleming had kept his many antagonists at bay, and had succeeded in warding off every blow. He was relieved to hear the watch tardily mustering, and cries of "Fly—fly! the watch is at hand!" made him hopeful of succor at last. While looking round for a moment to see the real state of matters, he was struck on the temple by a large stone, which laid him senseless on the ground at the mercy of his foes. But the fray was now over. The ruffians who had caused it hastily escaped. The watch arrived at leisure, when all danger was over. They took charge of the wounded—Van Diense among them—to convey them to some place of medical aid. Gabrielle insisted on leaving her carriage and seeing herself if life remained in her poor friend. Thankfully satisfied, as she knelt by his side, that he still lived, she would have taken him home with them, but the watch claimed him as their prisoner. She made them promise to take him to the nearest doctor, and paid them handsomely to take care of him, and bring her news where and how he was.

The watch then hurried the ladies away, lest their persecutors should return. They left them at the Palace, after demanding an extortionate *largesse*, and took full credit to themselves as their saviors; for, as they sagaciously put the case, "But for us, your ladyships would have been kidnapped or murdered;—the Queen herself could not have saved you. What could that poor gentleman have done? he must have died but for us. We saved you all, as we do night after night, in all sorts of perils,—hungry, sleepy, watching, and fighting. The rogues could not face us,—not they."

Next morning our wounded hero, thanks to the care and skill of an able leech, had almost recovered, though a dark bruise on the temple showed the injury he had received. A messenger came at dawn from the Palace to inquire after his health, and returned after a while with the following letter, in a delicate female hand, which much assisted the patient's restoration:—

"Dear Count Philip,—How shall we thank you for such seasonable aid when we were in extremity! Horrified—as we returned from a masque of Ben Jonson's at the Lady Sackville's—were we to find the streets possessed by ruffians. Oh, terrible sights and sounds! When you appeared, I *could* have flown to you; but I was terrified for you when the swords crossed; and oh, when you fell, as I thought dead,—and for us,—I cannot bear to remember it! What joy that you are spared! It was always so. You saved me and your sister from a fierce bull when but a boy. I hear you again saying, 'I told him to go away with my eyes, and he did go.' You have been our good genius, and we your evil one. Believe me, my heart is grateful, but very worldly. You dwell in a loftier region, where I could not live. How is it? Have patience with me, and pity me. I am not happy in in my gay world, nor in my grand prospects. Be as my brother. Ask no more. I hope you will be able to attend the opening of Parliament;—I shall look for you.

"Your old friend and comrade.

"GABRIELLE."

Van Diense meditated on this bitter-sweet effusion,—so advancing, and yet withdrawing,—so pleasant in its allusions to the past, but so blank in reference to the future; and he could not help sighing out, "Ah me! there is no alteration! She has a heart; but, with all her Popish forms, she has no feeling of a Christian object in life. Dear Gabrielle, I do pray for thee that this spiritual change may come! Charming now, but how angelic wouldst thou be then!"

Just then Alderman Sherwood was announced, full of eager concern about his friend, of whom he had only received tidings that morning. He was charged to bring him, ill or well, to the Dutch Embassy at once. Right glad was he to find him so far on the way to recovery that he stoutly declared his intention of accompanying his friend to the opening of Parliament. The day was fresh and bright. A March east wind swept in bracing gusts, blowing the dust into eddies, and playing odd freaks with cloaks and dresses. The roads were full of well-dressed people. Sedans and carriages were streaming in one direction. The church-bells rang out merry peals. Soldiers and the watch, in their trimmest array, were preparing to line and guard the main thoroughfares. Troops of members, with large bands of retainers wearing their election colors, jostled or fought for precedence. The poorer classes and the beggars turned out in swarms, with rude pastimes and mendicant arts. Most persons wore some sort of arms, and all reputable citizens had one or more armed apprentice or attendant.

At the Embassy they found the whole establishment preparing to make a gallant appearance, so as to confront the great monarchies with the due assertion of their republic. Seats were secured for them just behind the Court ladies, between whom and the gentlemen of the diplomatic corps there was a brisk interchange of compliment in all sorts of language and forms of speech. The roar of artillery and some popular cheering announced the King, who assumed his seat with a gloomy countenance. The Duke, as usual reckless of appearances, pulled awry the solemn wig of the Lord Chancellor, who, horror-stricken, was busied in unavailing attempts to pull the huge affair (about the size of a sheepskin) round again to its proper place.

There stood the Commons at the bar,—a group of as cultured intellects, profound statesmen, resolute and pious leaders of a country, as the world is ever like to see, whose names are still famous with an undying interest. There were Cromwell and Hampden, Eliot and Wentworth, Selden and Pym, Hollis and Coke, Rudyard, Seymour, Philips, and many more well worthy of the great crisis. These were men of independent fortunes, and not obliged to crouch before an absolute ruler. They dared to stand erect and look their King in the face while they conferred with him on the good of the realm, and hesitated not to tell him truths wholesome though unpleasant. It was expected that Charles might try to conciliate his Parliament; but to the concern even of his friends, this maladroit and haughty King, whose overtures were always too late, and his threats premature, under the influence of an irritation he could not control, uttered some very unhappy sentences.

In a high key and harsh tone, without prelude or preparation, His Majesty abruptly exclaimed, "I have called you together, judging a Parliament to be the ancient, speediest, and best way to give such supply as to secure ourselves and save our friends from imminent ruin. Every man must now do according to his conscience. Wherefore, if you—which God forbid—should not do your duties in contributing what this State needs, I must in discharge of my conscience use those other means which God hath put into my hands to save that which the follies of other men may otherwise hazard to lose. Take not this as threatening,—

I scorn to threaten any but mine equals,—but as an admonition from him that both of nature and of duty hath most care of your preservation and properties." Having thus delivered himself, the King sat down abruptly, amid a grave silence, while the angry murmurs and gibes of many were barely suppressed.

The grand assembly slowly broke up, but not before men and women were asking, "What can this mean?" The Commons, on withdrawing, could not repress their lively indignation. Said Wentworth, "We have had an act from the Wolf and Lamb."

"Our school-master finely lectured us. I had all but stripped for the birching," cried Hampden.

Said Noy, "The poor gentleman's larder is low, and he hungers for subsidies."

"He is a fool," said Selden, "who threatens his subjects when he should either please or surprise them. Forewarned is forearmed."

"Alas," sadly rejoined Sir John Eliot, "those other means and the Lord Keeper's hint of 'swords' can only mean civil war."

"Swords!" loudly exclaimed Cromwell; "we too wear swords,—and, please Heaven, we will show we can use them."

"Better first try every other way," answered Pym.

"God forbid the need," was Eliot's reply. "Some of us must die for England, that's plain."

"Be it so," rejoined Hampden; "but we must be wary rather than angry."

"Doubtless," replied Sir John Eliot; "but we need no admonition to remember it. Good God! to my dying day I shall remember the sting and shame of this unroyal outrage."

Our Fleming, having disengaged himself, waited in the passage by which the Queen and her escort found their exit. The Queen was saying in French, "My Charles was like a King to-day—with just a touch of the pedant; and he made all listen. He had the grand air!" The rest of the fine dames passed by remarking, "He gave it them roundly."—"They look fine men—Spaniards dress so well on gala days."—"'Tis a fine spectacle, only the Commons rush in like beasts."—"The ladies' fashions are not so striking this year."—"I did not fancy the rattling of swords—surely they won't fight!"

Gabrielle now came on talking merrily. The Fleming thanked her for her inquiries, and her letter. She said provokingly, "I did not think you were really so well, Philip, or I might have spared my forwardness."

"Your kindness, dear lady, has helped greatly to cure me."

"Nay, sir, I was not kind—I was half asleep, and thought my letter was very cold."

"Gabrielle, your very coldest kindness is as summer rays to me."

"There is no question of your goodness, but only of mine," answered the perplexing fairy; "and of this you are no fair judge. Really, Philip, I mean that nearer association would be bad for us. We should differ more than you think. You would be disappointed. I dare not follow my heart knowing myself to be what I am. Philip, this is the truth, though it distress you. It is better to know it."

"Lady, I respect your sincerity,—I have nothing to oppose; only you said something about *brother*, and after all I had rather be that than nothing."

"Very good," exclaimed the lady; "so be it. I am so glad you are content." Then rapidly turning to a young companion, she said, "See, Clara, this is my brother—ever since we were children. My brother, Lady Clara D——," she added, with singular liveliness of manner.

"Oh," replied Lady Clara, "your servant, sir! Gabrielle, you have not told me your brother's name. I had imagined a nearer sort of relation!" she said aside.

"Oh no! nothing of the sort—brother and sister." Some further talk ensued, in which the poor Fleming, as usual, had the worst, being let down from the zenith of love to a prosaic level by his merciless and merry companion. He heard Lady Clara expostulate in a whisper, and say, "Nonsense, Gabrielle,—you deceive yourself, and treat him shamefully!" She closed her remonstrance with the lines—

"Now be not coy, but use your time,
And while ye may—go marry;
For having lost but once your prime,
You may forever tarry."

CHAPTER XVIII.

BUCKINGHAM'S END.

"Had you rather Cæsar were living, and die all slaves, than that Cæsar were dead, to live all free men? As Cæsar loved me, I weep for him; as he was fortunate, I rejoice at it; as he was valiant, I honor him; but as he was ambitious, I slew him."—SHAKSPEARE.

Our Norfolk travelers remained in town some days further, in which they visited the House of Commons, and witnessed the calm and able statesmanship of the leaders—heard masterly orations from Seymour, Wentworth, Eliot, and Coke, in advocacy of the Petition of Right, while offering at the same time ample taxes for the King's service. They saw the servile terror of the courtiers, and the anxiety of the Court, during the crisis. The good Alderman Sherwood, after his friend had gone abroad, left London for Norwich, where he found all men eager for news, and the most erroneous rumors rife about foreign troops in London—the imprisonment of patriots—the dissolution of Parliament—the death of the Queen in confinement—the arrival of a Papal legate from Rome,—besides various monstrous incidents in heaven and earth.

The Corporation welcomed their returning officer with the usual dinner, at which, in the absence of the Mayor, Thomas Cory, Mr. Brightling presided with much felicity: only his daughter Lucy said, "Dad, I thought you had given up this sort of stuffing socialities! They always upset you for a day or two. You are sure to take the vilest dishes offered to you; and you'll hum and ha over your speech so that everybody will be asleep long before you finish." But it did not happen so, for he took his clever daughter with him, and she watched over him while she enjoyed the good things herself; and his speech was capital, because his heart was in it, for he loved Alderman Sherwood and Norwich, and his daughter's joke had roused him to an unusual effort. The fine Town Hall was full of burgesses. The plate was exhibited, and all the paraphernalia. Mr. Taylor delivered a powerful harangue, declaring that the Parliament had been greatly encouraged in upholding the Petition of Right by the messages borne by their Alderman and his worthy colleague the Fleming, and that both had deserved well of the old city. Dr. Hope upon this observed privately that he wondered they had escaped a dose of the Tower. The Bishop, who condescended to look in, said he had heard from his friend the Principal of Westminster School that his Norfolk pupils were inferior to none in ability and spirit. Here loud cheers were raised for "Westminster School and its Norfolk scholars." So the fine old Town Hall was gay with its streaming lights and carousing company, while outside were the whifflers and the band playing in the market,—a vast crowd lounging about and feasting themselves in imagination, and even old Snap was busily collecting his dues. Too many of the guests had to be led or carried home at an unduly early hour in the morning.

Alderman Sherwood called at the Rectory on his way to the feast, and was answering many questions, when Alice came and stood by him with expressive features and parted lips. He lifted her on his knee and kissed her, saying, "Sweetheart, they both sent love to you, and they seemed very happy and good."

"But, sir, you said Edward was a friend of that Stephen Wren whom George hates, and that they took opposite sides at school! Surely they are good friends still?"

"Yes, my lassie," replied the Alderman; "but out in the world men must take sides. Their opposition was only playing at an election. They are close brothers still,—only they said they missed a certain Alice who used to hold them together."

The tears came into her soft eyes at this unexpected praise. "So I did, sir," she said; "but Edward was always for the Court and Queen, and George for the Parliament and the Puritans. But, sir, do they really have ribbons and presents from the Queen's pretty maids? That will turn their heads and spoil them for home."

"Don't believe it, girl!" said her friend. "Early loves may be covered over by newer ones, but they live on often when the upper ones wither. They will come home the same to us—only grown and manly, I hope; and my pet here will be a fine, lovely young lady then, as good as any maid of honor."

The Fleming's visit abroad occupied a considerable time, and was prosperous. He returned to London, about the end of August, to find the Parliament still engaged on the Petition of Right, which, after long refusal, the King had reluctantly accepted. Both parties were becoming irritated and extreme. Buckingham had been named by Coke as "the grievance of grievances;" but he was on the point of leaving to command another expedition for the relief of Rochelle. He was, if possible, more hated than ever; while the King, by his bursts of passion, his dishonest evasions, and his high-handed messages, had worried his friends and provoked his enemies to the limit of endurance.

Men began to whisper that even the Duke could not curb his master, and would have propitiated the Puritans had he been allowed. The Queen had now unbounded influence over Charles, and instigated him to the harshest resolves. Gabrielle and her mother had gone suddenly to Paris in consequence of her brother's illness with fever, and would probably never return.

The Fleming went to see the Queen with his foreign treasures and dispatches, but met a cold reception. Henrietta would hardly attend to him; and the chatter of her Court was coarser, louder, and more intemperate than ever. The King entered while he remained, with eyes bloodshot and manner hurried. All seemed rather alarmed to see him, save his own laughing wife. "Well, Charles, have you had a deputation from your tyrants in the Parliament?—or have you been closeted with that sham priest Laud?—or has Steenie threatened to turn Puritan?"

"*Chérie*," said the Monarch, "I come to you now in all my troubles, and I want no better friend than my *jolie* Mariette;—but Steenie goes to Portsmouth to-morrow to the fleet."

"Ah! Voila la cause de votre tristesse—qu'il ne revient pas jamais—jamais!" she repeated, with vehemence.

"Bah! Maria,—he will make peace with your beloved Paris, and return in great popularity."

"Take your farewell of him, Sire," said the Queen, emphatically; "he will not come between us any more;—no one but a lady will ever do that!" half shrieked and half laughed Her Majesty.

The Fleming bowed his leave, and obtained instant access to Buckingham, whom he found surrounded by suitors—naval officers, and persons engaged in his outfit. Yet he drew aside his visitor, stretched himself on a divan as if utterly weary, and then said, "So you are home at last! Your bird of Paradise has flitted away, and left the Court more unbearable than ever."

"They were gay and noisy enough, your Grace, even now."

"I expect," said the Duke, "Gabrielle's brother will die, and that she will inherit a great position. My friend, we must get you reinstated, and appointed Ambassador from the States to England. Then you may defeat the wiles of priests who already scent the prey of a lady's wealth. It shall be done when I come back."

"Your Grace," observed the Fleming, gravely, "some say, and even wish, that you may never come back! You know I warned you before, but there is double reason now."

"Yes," replied Villiers, "you have been hearing my fortune told at Court. Never man had such a task as I, since we parted, to get subsidies for the King, and to keep him from bolting, dissolving, and what not. The Petition of Right made him furious, and his Queen goaded him on. She is all-in-all now—a Bellona of maddest passion. I am quite *de trop* at Court. The patriots have behaved so well, that I must rat, and lead them when I come back. Wentworth and a few more are ready for a coalition. We will displace Laud and revert to Queen Elizabeth's Protestant policy. England wants another Cecil;—I have been the King's minion too long. We will strike hands with your States, and with Germany and Sweden, and defy the Pope and Spain. The nation will rally again to that cry, and the Court must come down from the high horse. I shall relieve Rochelle this time, and come back with French peace; and then——"

At that moment a loud noise of voices was heard in the next room. An usher (in whom Van Diense recognized the Jesuit tutor, Green) was seen introducing a visitor who looked like a military man—stout, dark, and angry. This person approached, saying fiercely, "Your Grace,—my commission—my arrears of pay—my petition!—have you read——" Here he

paused, for he saw the Fleming calmly advance, so as to place himself between him and the Duke, who also exclaimed, "Stay where you are,—or, rather, depart! Who are you?"

"My name is Captain Felton," was the quieter reply. "You have ruined me. I require redress."

The Duke said, "I have not ruined you: you are mistaken. Go to my steward—he has orders to treat with you. I am sorry for you, and will do what I can for you; but I have no time now. Go to my steward—go!"

"Steward, forsooth!—I am no beggar. Your Grace has coolly refused my righteous demands. Farewell. We meet at Portsmouth, where once more I will implore your attention, and perhaps you will have time to hear me there," said the Captain with a sinister look.

When he had gone, Buckingham stared at the Fleming, saying, "That fellow could kill me. Well, if I should not return?—and even Charles has warned me: he spared not his own father,—tender son! Alas! it would be hard to fall just now, with a nobler course before me. Villiers! thou wilt seem to history a sycophant, a debauchee, a wretched coxcomb: yet thou hadst wishes and plans far other." Having thus spoken—as it were to himself, he took a hasty farewell of his friend, giving him some papers as he said, "Here are proposals to Eliot and Wentworth which will teach the Court a lesson. See to my property for my wife and family. Surely I shall weather this storm,—if not, look for the Devil and the Deluge after me! Laud and Charles together will drive into the crater of Vesuvius, or into the abyss of Tartarus itself. Sauve qui peut! Farewell."

As the Fleming quitted the Duke, a sight caught his view which confirmed his worst misgivings. At a corner of the road, in the evening dusk, two figures were skulking in close conversation. These were the Tutor and the fierce Captain. They parted even as he approached, and the Tutor only remained to meet him. "Why, Green, are you here—and with that ruffian? You shall answer for it if any harm happens."

"God forbid, sir!" was the sleek reply. "I could not help hearing the fellow's story, and I have quieted him into a state of Christian forgiveness."

"You don't expect to impose on me," said the Fleming, "after what passed in Norwich?"

"Under your favor, sir," said Green, "you are wholly mistaken. At Norwich I was the mere agent of a Superior, who has cast me off because I was not an unscrupluous tool. I did my best to prevent evil,—and see what it has brought me to!"

"Yes," rejoined the Fleming, "because you were not successful. Have you not influenced the boys at Westminster School since then?"

"What would you have, sir? I was their tutor,—fond of them. I only carried a few messages to young Wren. The Duke is my best friend; but I shall not always brook to be a valet."

"And you are prepared to betray him, or any one else who trusts you!" said the Fleming. "Mind, I have my eye on you! I have frustrated your plots once, and may do so again. Beware!"

The Tutor turned away muttering, "Conantur impie nocere bonis. Ridet eos, Dominus, quod vidit eorum adventare diem."

"Hold!—what threats are these? What day do you predict? Come with me to your master and answer for yourself!" cried the Fleming as he rushed to seize him. The fellow took to his fleet heels, however, and vanished.

The next day the Fleming was at the Dutch Embassy, with Eliot, Wentworth, and others, studying with pleasant surprise the Duke's new plans.

Wentworth observed, "His Grace is a true wonder—a very chameleon! This would effect a revolution of peace and liberty which the Court would be powerless to resist."

"But," replied the cautious Eliot, "how long will this fit last? What guarantees have we? What will bind this shameless adventurer?"

"Yet," observed the Ambassador, "you have the fact of his necessity. The Queen has supplanted him. He is wise in his generation. What he proposes is England's true policy, and we Protestants abroad would gladly support him."

The Fleming added, "From long knowledge of the Duke, I think he is in earnest now. He has curbed the Court considerably of late. You lose nothing by accepting these proposals, even should they fail. The gain otherwise were immense."

"True," cried Eliot. "We agree to support the Duke as Minister if Parliament shall not be dissolved, and peace be made,—if Laud and his Popish ideas be abandoned, and the Petition of Right be honorably observed, and the Puritans unmolested. That is a most hopeful prospect if it be realized!" To this declaration all assented, and with more sanguine feelings these patriots began to discourse on the way to profit by this escape from national shipwreck.

Late at night they were separating, when a foreign dispatch arrived with news from Paris, and a note from Gabrielle was handed to Van Diense, which read thus :—

"Dear Brother,—For so I was to call you. In sorrow I turn to you. My brother died some days ago. They tell me I am a great heiress, and that I must be betrothed or enter a convent. Unlikely as it seems, I am ready for the latter. The priests warn me privately that the husband proposed for me is a gambler and a tyrant. Perhaps they have their ends to serve. My mother and her family, I fear, will force my marriage for *convenance*. So before I can see you again, brother, I may be a nun, or the Duchess of R——.

"Don't be angry with your poor sister! What can a girl do?

"Adieu! Toujours votre sœur fidèle,

"GABRIELLE."

The Fleming read this with a stunned feeling. All his hopes seemed to dry up. As he mused and measured this depth of woe, another messenger arrived breathless from Court to the Ambassador, with news which was as a thunderclap:—

"Buckingham was stabbed this morning at Portsmouth, by an officer named Felton. The Duke is dead."

The messenger added privately that the King seemed not greatly surprised, and only remarked, "I warned him, and gave him a book of devotion and a holy relic to keep about him, which he put aside, saying, 'Charles, these were the Infanta's gifts, whom we deserted in Spain. I can't take them.'"

The Queen was nettled, and replied, "But for him, you had never seen your ugly Infanta, for you had already promised me in Paris."

"I cannot be too thankful to have you,—and now, alas! you alone."

"Poor Steenie! he'll bark and bite no more," was the Queen's remark.

If the Court were thus callous and unsusceptible under its loss, everywhere else the event caused a lively sensation. All hope of a political coalition was over, and of freedom's progress. The ascendancy of the Court and Laudian party was assured. The course of the Parliament was overcast, and an early dissolution probable. It was now seen that the Duke, bad as he was, had been a sort of breakwater, on whose removal there remained only, as he had said, "The Deluge and Tartarus for England."

That night was to the Fleming one in which the strong pillars of his faith were sorely tried. As the foreign courier was returning at once, he sent the news respecting Buckingham to Paris, with a line to Gabrielle advising her to take time and not be hurried. He suggested that she should consult with the Dutch Ambassador at Paris, and ask if she could not be helped to escape to Brussels, where she would be comparatively her own mistress. He had small hope of his advice being followed, even if it reached her. He held himself in submission to the mysterious will of Divine Providence, and prepared to quit London for Norwich. Buckingham dead, the Court at the zenith of headstrong willfulness, and Gabrielle lost—what to him, for the time, was London—or even life?

CHAPTER XIX.

DULCE DOMUM.

"Nun ich Wiederkehr
Fühl ich nimmermehr
Das die Giesel Schon, die Winter schwingt
Dan ich,weiss es ja
Das die Stunde nah,
Die zu dir, zu dir, mich wiederbringt."
OSTERVALD.

"The Sherwood boys come home to-day," said the Rector one fine morning in the summer, some few years after the opening of our tale. "I am to ride out with their father to meet and welcome them. It will be a happy day for us all."

"Boys!" said Alice; "we must be rather more respectful to the young men, father. How changed they will be! and how changed everybody and everything will seem to them! After London, how flat Norwich will be! What will they find to entertain them?"

"All is changed, indeed," said her mother. "You, Alice, for example, were a little slip of a girl then." Verily, Alice was changed. Her fine oval face and clear warm complexion, her tender eyes with liquid fire playing from them, her rich tresses of dark chestnut hair, Grecian type of head and feature, her arched brows, intelligent forehead, and animated expression, formed a noble and winsome whole of which no Court could have been ashamed.

She sighed, and answered, "Am I changed, mother? I fear we shall not know each other, and the old friendship is dead." Then she knelt by her mother's knee, and looked up very eagerly in her face, whispering, "Don't you think it will be, mother?"

"Not so, my love,—it will revive quickly in a better form. But you tremble. Are you afraid of your brothers?—such they are. You know what messages and presents they have continued to send. Try to rejoice!"

"So I do, mother; yet I am a little afraid of them too. Isn't it silly?"

Her mother caressed her, and said, "It will all come right when you meet."

During the years which had passed, this good mother had been carefully training her daughter's character.

While her father imbued her with a love of literature, the mother made her a companion, not only in domestic duties, but in her rounds of charitable visits. She read with her books suited to fill her mind with appropriate thoughts, and to enrich her conversation. She drew her attention to the noblest cases of female devotion in works of mercy. Thus the impulsive eagerness of Alice's nature, the quick self-will of an only child, had been subdued to womanly softness, and intercourse with the suffering had educated her sympathies.

Much about the same time, a gay cavalcade was leaving Thetford. Four gentlemen rode first, each with his pack-saddle strapped behind; followed by armed servants who bore their luggage. The three younger men were the Westminster scholars, — fine, well-grown fellows, full of activity and high spirit, joking and laughing in loud, careless fashion.

As they spurred along they were discussing school matters.

"Old Baldy," said Wren, "will get himself into a scrape, and I should not cry over it if he did."

"I hope not," answered Edward;—"he is a splendid teacher."

"Splendid or not," answered the former, "he is too free-spoken."

"Yes," said Dr. Green, who was now in orders as an English clergyman, with his squeaking falsetto, "I know my good lord the Archbishop distrusts him, and has evidence against him which will bring him to the pillory, or worse."

"Thank you!" retorted George, laughing out; "I shall take care to give the good Doctor warning. He is too good a fellow to be so unfairly treated. You know I always took up the cudgels in his defense at school. He has been a good friend to us, and is the glory of Westminster School."

"Perhaps you are right," said Dr. Green. "I am no enemy of the Westminster Principal. It is his own affair."

"I should like to see old Baldy pilloried," said Wren, in defiance of George. "I would pay him out with a rotten egg or a dead cat for his raps on my knuckles."

"Ten chances to one you would hit some one else!" again laughed merry George, resolved not to quarrel that day. "But surely here is father and our good Rector riding to meet us!"

Looking up over the lovely landscape, they saw the advancing figures. They all hastened on, and exchanged most hearty greetings; only Dr. Green held aloof from the rest, and was little noticed except by Wren and Edward. They then rode on rapidly towards the old city, till they parted at Alderman Sherwood's door, the rest proceeding to the Bishop's Palace. At the front door, waiting to receive them, was Will Barnard, who had succeeded his father as clerk of the parish, and was now married to his old sweetheart, Ann, who also stood within the

doorway. Above, at open windows, were Mrs. Sherwood's stout, good natured person, with Alice and her mother, who leant so far forward that George, and then Edward, came up on horseback, and kissed their hands, each gazing on the other in the silence of inexpressible affection.

"Welcome home, my boys!" said the mother. "I've a good dinner ready for ye."

"Dear mother," said George, "no one can starve under your roof." Then, turning to Ann, he said, "I always prophesied what would become of you."

"Well," said she, "I could not let the clerk's house be without a mistress."

"No, nor the clerk either!" George replied.

Having dismounted, they hastened in-doors to receive their mother's embraces.

After a hearty dinner, and plenty of questioning and information, friends began to drop in to pay their salutations. Dr. Hope and his daughter May were the first. He was delighted at the manly, vigorous stature of both his patients, and May and George entered into lively badinage, as they had been wont. One after the other, the Ridgeleys, Dame Norris, the Brightlings, Lucy Graves, Hannah Vores, and Grace Friend, Taylor the Lawyer, with Herbert Hervey of Holt, a friend of George, and several more, filled up the handsome room with a cheerful party. The Allens also appeared with warm salutations. Harriet impulsively greeted the young men with "It is good to see you again; we have been very flat without you;" when John broke in with "Certainly old Norwich has quite gone to sleep: you have been held up as model heroes, and we have been cast quite into the shade. Be sure you keep up to the standard. At all events, my duties as stop-gap are terminated."

General expressions of regret at the absence of Van Diense and his sister were frequently uttered, and his disappointment in love was alluded to.

"I doubt the truth of that report," said George; "he is more likely to win anything he sets his heart on."

"Only," answered merry May, "wise men often make mistakes about ladies' love."

"Because ladies like playing at cross questions and crooked answers," replied George somewhat tartly. Indeed, things seemed a little cross already, for Alice was absorbed in some rather serious communications which Edward was making to her, and George was occupied in lively sallies with May Hope and the Ridgeleys.

Presently music was called for, and Alice went to the spinnet, while the rest sustained her with voice or instrument. They gave very sweetly,

> "As it fell upon a day
> In the merry month of May,"

in which Alice thrilled the air with her treble, and May tenderly imitated the nightingale's "teru, teru." To this followed another nightingale song,

> "What bird so sings, yet doth so wail?—
> Oh, 'tis the ravished nightingale,"

in which also imitations of the lark, redbreast, and cuckoo are beautifully given. On lawyer Brightling expressing his delight, his daughter wickedly said, "Now, dad, no pretenses!—you know you were just asleep, and were rather angry at being waked, if you told the truth."

Her father jocularly answered, "I only wish, Lucy, I was always waked by such musical voices, instead of by such scolding as yours."

"Far better for you, dear dad," was the daughter's reply.

"To show how little we regret leaving the city," said George, "let us have Raleigh's

> "Heart-tearing cares and quivering fears,
> Anxious sighs, untimely tears,
> Fly, fly to Courts."

"There!" said gushing Grace Friend, "I call that delicious,—almost too sweet to bear. Alas that such sweet fountains 'glide by' so rapidly and leave us so empty! Thank you a thousand times!"

"Yes," added her friend Hannah Vores, "thank you indeed! Some one told me that city life spoiled the young men, but I think not at all. What say you, dear Rector? But I always like to listen to the words. Which do you consider most important, dear sir, words or music? Some say both; but then, how to hear both at once?"

This first meeting did not leave an impression of satisfaction on all hearts. George took himself off to bed with rather chilled heart and silent tongue. Alice also walked silently home by her mother, who at last roused her attention.

"Mother," she said, "the old friendship will not come back again, I fear."

"Why, you and Edward seemed to be very communicative."

"Yes, he is far from happy, and wanted to tell me his troubles."

"Very well; but had George no troubles to tell?"

"Oh, mother! he is too happy and gay."

"I am not so sure of that; I thought he would have liked a little of the old friendship too."

"Oh, mother! if I thought that, I should be sorry: but I thought—I meant—indeed, I am very tired."

"My child, sleep, and wait till to-morrow, and all will come right again."

May Hope said, as she rode home, "They are changed! I used to like Edward the best, but George was very amusing. I wonder what Edward was saying to Alice!"

"One evening does not make a life-time," said her father. And all the while the white, ghostly moon looked down through the clouds which sailed rapidly over her, like an actress shining through many changeful parts, and smiling at human illusions and lovers' troth.

George and Edward settled down at home for some time. The absence of the Fleming was a serious loss. They had studies to occupy them, but they were left very much to their own devices. They missed greatly their school-mates, with the boisterous agility of the play-ground, and the brisk competition of the class. Often they had longings for school-life, and would gladly have returned to its order and energy. They found that being their own masters involved more trouble and less freedom than they had fancied.

Edward had made great progress in the ancient classics and mathematics, and was strongly recommended to proceed to one of the universities. Indeed, he had obtained a Cambridge scholarship, and was reading with Stephen Wren, under Dr. Green, until the end of the vacation. Edward was of a grave, earnest temperament, and was eager to become a priest of the English Church, a tendency which naturally drew him to the Bishop's Palace. His mother was pleased at what she felt would be a fine opening for her son. With youthful energy Edward resolved to devote himself fully to his vocation. Not having much sense of the spiritual parts of religion, he was dazzled by the exterior forms, the musical and decorative taste, and the mechanical drilling of congregations under official sway which distinguished the Laudian school.

Alice continued to be Edward's chief confidante, and she entered into his warm desires to give his life in self-denying service to the Church. The maiden shared his concern about George, whom at present she feared—though it wrung her inmost heart to think so—was being led astray by worldly influences.

George was of a more robust mold than Edward. He might have been wild and wanton but for the influence of the Bridges and of the Fleming. He had not made distinguished progress in school studies, but in the play-ground he was a sort of spontaneously-chosen captain. He settled disputes with a merry jest; he protected little boys from bullies with patronly kindness; he was at the head of sports, but he put down all mean and shabby tricks. When, on leaving, George went up for a somewhat inferior prize in Latin, there arose a shout from the school which greeted no other name, and Dr. Osbaldeston said his departure would be "a real loss to the cheerful, orderly spirit of the school." While at school George had gone to the houses of Eliot and Vane, his school-fellows, and there met Oliver Cromwell, then a comparatively young man. He was pleased with George, and invited him to his lodging in London. Cromwell urged him to study military matters. George had promised to be at Cromwell's call if need arose. When at home he therefore went to the barracks and chose the profession of a soldier. The manners of the Cavalier officers were justly offensive to religious people; and though George had nothing to do with them but in actual drill, he shared their obloquy in some quarters. Mistress Bridge, however, knew well that George's religion was not without fruit, for who so ready as he to take her errands to her poor parishioners? and who was so welcome with his cheery laugh and tart hits, in every house? Who but he could have assembled on Sunday afternoons a goodly band of near a hundred young men to sing religious hymns, repeat the Catechism, and to enforce it with many a quaint story and apposite remark?

One lovely afternoon at the close of summer, George was calling on his special friend Taylor, with whose patriotic aspirations he had much in common, when Alice called alone with a message from her father. On leaving, George accompanied her, glad of a rare occasion of finding her alone, and resolved to improve it. Alice was going on to the Ridgeleys at Thorpe. The road of the young people wound through the quiet and aristocratic Close, by private paths overhung by branching trees, to the old picturesque ferry. Then they loitered in the yellow-sprinkled meadow, beside the flashing, eddying stream, until their way turned up a gentle hill, through the wooded copses of Thorpe, in which birds sang merrily, and the sunshine parted by the foliage cast its checkered light and shade over the scene.

"George," said Alice, rather forbiddingly, "what can you find in that Roundhead, Taylor, that you associate with him so much?"

"I don't agree with him," answered George; "but your father and he esteem each other greatly."

"My father can get no harm from his notions George, your companions of late seem rather questionable."

"Glad you are careful of my good manners," answered the youth, "as the sparrow said to the lark when she reproved him for picking crumbs from a Jew's table."

"An evil conscience is generally sore," said the young lady, still on the tack of monitress.

"And a sore heart," returned George, "is apt to be irritable,—so forgive me."

"One would not suspect such a disorder from your habitual levity," said Alice.

"If one is shut out of conference, how should one behave right? Alie, why is it that since we came home I have scarcely been allowed a single conversation?"

"George, you know that you have not sought the old friendship, or——" and here the young lady broke down, and looked the rest.

"Alice," said George, much subdued, "forgive me if it has been my fault."

"No," Alice rejoined quickly, "that would not be fair. But Edward at once opened up all his troubles. I should have been as ready to hear what interests you, only you seem too proud to tell me."

"Well, Alie, you shall find it is not pride; but I have no such awful secrets as Edward seems to disclose to you alone, and which are, perhaps, heavier than you should be called to bear."

"Understand," quickly rejoined the lady, "I cannot tell you anything of them."

"I have no desire to pry into what Edward thinks right to withhold from his brother; but allow me to suggest that you are not quite right in encouraging such mystery, and getting involved in such ecclesiastical intrigues. You would be wise to take your father into your confidence, rather than trust your own gentle inexperience."

"Well, George, there is truth in what you say, and I am glad of the old frankness between us. I do feel somewhat burthened and uneasy; but I am partly so about you."

"That is," said George, "about what they tell you of me. I am aware that I am under suspicion, and I certainly cannot take Edward's line, nor his associates'."

"Oh, but," said Alice, "he does not like Dr. Green at all, nor Stephen Wren very much; but he is very anxious to be a devoted clergyman."

"Very good," said George; "could he have a better model than your father? Why should he seek his patterns from the other party?"

"And are you, George, in no danger from your association with those licentious officers?"

"I have no fellowship with them, Alie. I am learning my profession."

"But you incur a good deal of dislike and suspicion."

"So did the dog," said George, "when he, being turned out of the house on a wintry night, ran in for warmth to the pigs. In the morning he had escaped death by the frost, but they whispered about that he was a dirty fellow!"

Alice smiled, and her brow cleared as she answered, "You always were so funny and so pat with your retorts. But they say you have joined with those who oppose the King, and threaten to upset Church and State."

"Have I?" rejoined George. "But you know best, perhaps, what side those choose who complain of me,—the side of Rome against England, and of tyranny against Parliament. As for me, I hope to be an honest soldier, and probably shall go abroad to serve awhile with the Swedish armies; and I shall care the less to go as I am suspected here.."

"Dear George," said Alice, now softened, "little did I think you would ever speak so to me. Who more missed you when you went away to school than your old playfellow?"

Here she hesitated, but George came nearer, and took her arm in his, and said, "Go on, go on, Alie!—those are the sweetest words I have heard since I came home. God knows I would not have you altered to my brother; but it is hard to be neglected by him and by you too. If Edward trusts you with his cares, will you only trust me with some of your own,—not of his, if he does not wish?"

"Oh, George, he loves you dearly,—only he is not free."

"There, my dear Alie, is my fear for you both. He is entering into a web of secrets and plots of the evil of which he is unconscious in the nobleness of his greater purpose. I know more of them than you think, and am watchful over him. And you must let me watch over you too. Alie, I believe we shall soon be wakened by a storm we little expect. The bishops and the Court mean to make short work of all Puritans: they will force them to resign all their livings, and fill them up with Jesuit-trained priests. This is the plot. Your own father will be one of its first victims. You will have to fly from England."

"Well, I once dreaded such a misfortune, but in such a cause," said Alice, "I could now glory in it. Yet surely we should all go together?"

"Nay, dear Alie, they are so entangling Edward that he will be compelled to remain."

"I cannot believe it,—I will warn him."

"Do, and see what he says. I fear I also must stay here."

"Oh, George, I begin to see that I have been a little blind, and not quite considerate to you. But I thought you were unlike your old self, and I have been so sorry, and I couldn't bring it right." And now excited feeling found vent in a few sobs, which George quietly soothed, saying, "Blessings on you, Alie! you have made it all right. Perhaps you were right, and I have been selfish, when I should have kept Edward's confidence. But you have it, Alie; and be sure you keep it, for it would be sad to have him snatched from our trio of childhood, and made a tool of the Jesuits. But let confidence once again be confirmed between you and me. Tell me anything that concerns yourself and your home, and be sure there is nothing possible that I will not dare for you."

"I never doubted that, dear George. Your friendship always gave me strength and security. I am so glad the chilly time of mistake and queerness is over! I shall be happier than ever."

George could only look his fervent thanks as he whispered, "Blessings on you, dearest Alie!"

They now reached the gate of the pretty garden surrounding the Ridgeley's house, which stood on an elevated terrace overlooking the Wensum valley. As Alice paused at the open gate with the pretty verandahed house as a background—the shrubs, weeping birches, and willows hanging gracefully overhead, and looked down a step or two from above, with a serene calm on her face, a soft light in her eyes, and a rather caressing manner in her figure as she bent towards him, George felt a great spasm of loving desire go through him, so that it was hard to avoid taking her in his arms.

CHAPTER XX.

THE BOOK OF SPORTS.

> "Two went to pray?—O rather say
> One went to brag, the other to pray.
> One stands up close, and treads on high
> Where the other dares not lift his eye.
> One nearer to God's altar trod,
> The other to the altar's God."

Some time had passed since the last events. The country groaned more and more under the continued tyranny of Lord Strafford—the recreant Wentworth who had gone over to the Court, and Laud—in both the Church and the State. Civic liberty was a shadow. Every place swarmed with spies, and heavy fines suppressed all serious talk. People might jest and swear, gamble, riot, and drink to their hearts' content; but a hasty word of complaint against any Church officials brought speedy penalties. Presence at a conventicle, or opposition to Popish ceremonies, was punished most severely. Many lovers of liberty had escaped beyond seas to Holland or America. Others were eager to follow them, but now all fugitives were ordered to be arrested on suspicion. About this time a vessel in the Thames, bound for America, had on board many patriots, who despaired of Old England, among whom were John Hampden and Pym, and it has been said (though without sufficient evidence) Oliver Cromwell himself. Already Wren had driven many of his best clergy and laity into exile. King James, emulous of introducing a continental Sabbath into England, had in his reign caused to be drawn up a paper called the "Book of Sports," expressly enjoining on the clergy to encourage pastimes and feasts on the Sabbath—such as wakes, fairs, clerk and bid-ales, morice-dancing, archery, wrestling, leaping, and plays. Not only was this *book* published by authority, but every clergyman in London was ordered to read it out from the pulpit on the Sabbath-day, and to enjoin its observance. The measure emptied so many London pulpits by resignation of their benefices, that it was not pressed. But now, in Charles's reign, it was thought the reproduction of this Book of Sports would be popular, and would trouble the Puritan clergy. The effect of this too dexterous move becomes the pivot of our story.

The sun was shining with luster on Mr. Bridge's large garden, where he sat on a bench under a fine jargonelle pear tree. The garden was of irregular shape, and blended agreeably the orchard, lawn, flower, and fruit garden. There was a considerable extent of green lawn, an old high red wall inclosing it in. It was an old-fashioned place, not prim and stiff, but like a large woodland bower carpeted with daisied grass, sprinkled with colored flower-beds, and roofed over by overhanging leafy branches, through whose intertwining and waving network the sun shot his rays, and also cast his soft shadows. The eccentric Alderman who laid out this pleasant ground boasted that he had "built a south wall *all round* it." The same old worthy made many such blunders, and when asked regarding his daughter's confinement whether the child was a boy or a girl, simply answered, "Bless my soul, I don't know whether I am a grandfather or a grandmother!" The Rector was very fond of his garden, and often at dawn he was in his arbor reading and writing, while watching the progress of daylight, the opening of flowers, and enjoying the carol of the birds. Here his heart found quiet rest from the contact with human sorrow and sin, and the disfavor and persecution which the Puritans had now to endure. He was at this time conversing with his favorite neighbor, the Rev. Thomas Allen, and observing that now they had hardly power to do anything even in their own parishes. Their visits to parishioners even in sickness were watched, and any conversation or service besides the mere reading of the Common Prayer was forbidden. They could hold no gathering of the people but under peril of being charged with holding conventicles.

"I believe," said Mr. Allen, "that your George's band of young men have had notice that Dr. Green is to meet them as the Bishop's substitute."

"Is that so?" said his friend. "How will they submit? That looks as if Dr. Green aimed at some authority here."

"He looks to have this living, no doubt," said Allen.

An ancient apparitor from the Palace was at that moment seen advancing under the bending trees, and over the smooth turf. He bore in his hand a large dispatch, which with deep bows he handed to the Rector, who, on opening it, read out a summons to meet the clergy of the diocese at the Palace two days hence for important business. "Well, Solomon," said the Rector, who had long known this good old man, "we shall be there. Know you what the meeting is for?"

"Your Reverence, I am a poor old doited creature, and no one tells me anything, but I guess it bodes some of ye no good, for I have had to hurry about it, and that's no good token. Then it's on a fresh kind of paper, and that bodes evil. Then it was Father Christopher who handed the papers to me, and that's strange. Then as I hastened here I stumbled twice, and that is a bad sign. A great many copies of an old book reprinted about sports are at my office till they are wanted, and that seems queer. Then there's another long paper of queries ready for issue, and that's not a good sign. There's a storm rising; and, masters, I pray it strike none of us! Farewell."

When the shrewd, croaking old officer had gone, Allen said, "Now that honest man warns us of a revival of the Book of Sports."

"I have always," said Bridge, "kept up the old customs on Sundays after service, but I should not like to be compelled to enforce them. Yet to refuse would seem narrow and unpopular."

"Ah," rejoined the other, "but there will be demands of a still more unpalatable sort."

"Could we not read the paper from the pulpit, Allen, and then make our own explanation?"

"Probably that will not be permitted," was the reply.

"Well, the vital decision is at hand, and we must be ready for it," said Bridge. "I hardly think I can submit further, yet it is hard to be an exile. We shall be called fools and bigots by many, but we shall be understood better in the future, and to our Master we live and act." Allen took his farewell, leaving his friend seated thoughtfully under his favorite pear-tree. Bridge watched the lessening figure of his friend as he passed along the grass toward the glass door of the house, which glittered picturesquely beneath arches of foliage. When he had quite gone, the Rector looked round on the beloved scene, and gave way to overwrought feeling. "Must I leave this earthly Paradise, and these sweet perspectives of my Eden become the home of another, and be to me only a mocking memory? Must dear England vanish, and a foreign shore scarcely welcome to its uncouth haunts and manners the English pilgrim? Must my home-loving wife, and tender Alice, be torn from the only domestic scenes they have ever known, and change the delicacies of leisure and ample means for care and penury? Shall I no longer have a flock for whom to study and pray? Must I be debarred from the blessed work of preaching the love of Christ for want of the tongue and speech of other lands? What shall I do? O God, be with us wherever we are!—my only trust is in Thee."

The two clergymen said little of this summons, but on the appointed day went to the Palace together. They were first guided into the chapel for a short service, which was very like a Popish mass. Then they entered the great reception hall, Bridge finding only a small group of friends among a large body of strange priests. The Bishop in pomp took his throne, and by him were Father Christopher, Dr. Green, and others of his personal suite. He delivered a rambling discourse, full of accusations against the Puritans and Calvinists. At the close he said he had a few matters which, as the head of the diocese, he must press on the attention of all his clergy. It was thought right by the King's Council and the hierarchy to revive a valuable book of the former King's reign, for the better observance of the Sabbath, with cheerful customs such as were common in ancient times. This good book they would be expected to read on Divine Service to their congregations, and to insist on its fulfillment. Besides this, he had prepared a few queries, to which he desired prompt answers; and so commended them to God's holy keeping.

The papers were distributed and examined hastily. A clergyman asked if reading the Book of Sports once over would suffice, and if he might explain his own position and views. He was answered that no comment was allowed, and that the book was to be enforced. The queries related to the absolute Divine right of the King, to an oath for the clergy of absolute conformity to the forms of the Church of England, and to the holding of no afternoon sermons or week-day conventicles; and, in short, doing nothing in any parish without the episcopal sanction. Several of the clergy—Bridge among the rest—put queries on these points, but were cried down by the clerical majority, and harshly rebuked by the Bishop.

"Then," said Bridge aloud, when discussion was prevented, "all liberty and personal conscience are taken from the parish clergy. This is Romish bondage back again."

"Silence your unworthy insinuations," sharply said the Bishop. "There are many good things in Rome, and one of them is obedience to proper authority. It is time to

see if any is left in this irreligious land. If obedience be now refused, we must and will enforce it." Bridge was about to reply, when loud jeers and cries of "To prison with him!" "Arrest him!" "Punish him!" arose from most of the clergy; while the Bishop, smiling scornfully, with his harsh voice exclaimed, "Driveler! I have long marked you for a rebel. You will not long be free to spread your influence and to air your insolence."

Bridge, Allen, and a few more retired with sad hearts to talk and pray over their imminent peril, and their duty, which now seemed very plain. They came to the resolution to resign their livings at once, and to cast themselves on the gracious providence of a faithful God.

When they had separated, the Rector explained to his wife and daughter what had occurred, and then realized what a woman's fortitude is capable of in real calamity. Both ladies, together with George, applauded the resolve; and Alice, on learning the treatment of her father, and what was required of the clergy, indignantly exclaimed, "Let us leave England till she knows the worth of her best children."

The next day after the convocation of the clergy the resignation was sent, and met with no reply but the sentence of excommunication, and the appointment in his place of cringing Dr. Green, the Bishop's subservient tool. The interior of the plain old church was all decorated on the first Sunday of Dr. Green's appearance as Rector, the altar railed in, the service intoned, and the ancient choir exchanged for surpliced choristers. The Book of Sports was read, as well as the oath of royal Divine right, amid the awkward genuflections of the ungraceful Rector. At the close of the service, the old sounding-board over the pulpit suddenly cracked, and fell with a terrific noise, crushing the pulpit; and many silently wished Dr. Green had been under it. On leaving church and crossing Tombland, the Rector's old friends saw with pain the archery butts and may-poles erected, and provision for turning the Sabbath into Saturnalia commenced. As the Rector's family passed over the Green, many quietly wrung his wife's hand, or bowed to her; but the strongest testimony borne to her displaced husband was from Widow Freeman, his old antagonist, who, taking her hand by force, said aloud, "I never liked your husband when he was in office, but I honor him more to-day. Let who will say nay, he is more of a Christian than those who have sent him away. My husband's blessing, and my poor Lydia's, are with him and with you!"

But her son Jacob, in great anger, came and dragged her off, crying out, "Mother, come away!—you don't know what you do. Bridge is an excommunicated heretic!"

"Let me alone, you fool," said the roused mother, "and go to your Wrens and Greenfinches, and your squeaking birds who are pecking out old England's eyes."

Bridge remained some time in Norwich, and received numerous expressions of respect, though very privately tendered; but hearing that a writ *ad capiendum* was out against him, he prepared to fly, first to Yarmouth, and there to wait a favorable occasion for crossing the sea.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE PILLORY.

"Even so, or with much more contempt, men's eyes
Did scowl on Richard; no man cried, God save him;
No joyful tongue gave him his welcome home;
But dust was thrown upon his sacred head,
His face still combating with tears and smiles,
The badges of his grief and patience,
That had not God for some strong purpose steeled
The hearts of men, they must perforce have melted,
And barbarism itself have pitied him."

SHAKSPEARE.

STEPHEN WREN and Dr. Green were lounging in a private room of the Palace before a table on which was a large beaker of brown ale, and tankards for the drinkers. Wren was in a military undress, worn with slovenly negligence; and Green appeared in his cassock, or soutane,—very new and clean, but which set ill on his thick-set, awkward person.

Both looked excited over the theme of their discourse, and Wren warmly exclaimed,

"Green, I know not what to make of you! Why such revenge? The cuckoo is content to seize the nest, but suffers the former dwellers to fly away. Why lay hands on Bridge when you have his living?"

"Stephen," rejoined the other, "do you forget your own father, and the Jesuit who inspires him? It is not their will to let these clergy escape, and breed fresh swarms of sectaries over the sea. They will have their will over Bridge and Allen, as over others already. But what mean you by pursuing Alice? You would never wed the daughter of a ruined and disgraced heretic! What mean you by this wild-goose chase?"

"Wed!" was the tart reply; "of that you give me a fine specimen. What do I mean? I like the girl;—she has spirit beyond her training. I will not let George have her, come what will. I will spite him to the death."

"Then," said Green, "you have a rare chance, for George is to take Bridge and Allen, disguised as sailors, to a lodging in Pocthorpe this night, in hope of escape to Yarmouth. There we can easily apprehend them and probably George also, without the *éclat* and opposition of arresting them at home. We will make sure of the capture, if you will only assist, as a friend, to persuade the victims to enter the decoy."

"Very good," cried Stephen, rising from the table, "I will adjourn to the Sherwoods, and they will consult me as a friend, to their cost."

"Well, well," said Green, with a cold sneer, "farewell. Success attend you."

They parted, and Wren at once found entrance at the hospitable house whose inmates he was ready so basely to trepan. Standing on the threshold, he said to himself, "Now for a change of parts—the deferential young gentleman, the warmly interested friend, the half-ecclesiastic, and the family confidant! Now, am I ready?" He heard sounds of loud and eager conversation, whose echoes led him to the room where most of the two families of the Sherwoods and the Bridges were met to confer on the danger impending.

"Ah, Stephen!" cried Edward, the first to welcome the new-comer, on whose entrance several of the party looked very gloomily,—"you can probably throw some light on our anxieties."

"Extremely concerned," said Wren, "to learn your fears, which I know are too true. Your excellent pastor, and my kind friend, is in real peril. My information leads me to believe that he must quit this neighborhood for a safer and obscurer place at once, or this night he will be torn from your very midst. Surely some temporary shelter may be found, but here he must not stay."

"Would they dare to take him from his home and parish?" said Alice. "Oh, dear father, for you to hide and skulk!—what a reward for a life of holy blessing!"

"Dearest Alice," returned her father, "it is written of saints 'of whom the world was not worthy' that they wandered in sheep-skins and goat-skins, in deserts and in dens and caves of the earth, being destitute, afflicted, and tormented."

Soon after this conversation the disguised clergymen were escorted by George and his band to one of the poorest houses in Pocthorpe, where they supposed their hiding was quite unknown. Late at night, however, without warning, this refuge was secretly surrounded by agents of the Bishop, who had the refugees in their power before their guards had any idea of their danger. George brought up his force to the rescue, disguising his presence as well as he could, only to find himself the mark for a determined effort to capture his person. He was convinced that the masked leader of his assailants was none other than Stephen Wren, and cursed in his heart the misplaced confidence in such a wretch. He escaped, but only to convey the sad news of the failure of his own plan for the security of those so greatly beloved. The grief and dismay caused by his report may be imagined, specially as in a few days it was learnt that the prisoners were treated with barbarous severity by the cruel Bishop, and that after a mock trial they were condemned shortly to stand in the pillory on Tombland Green, and to be taken thence to the market-place, to be publicly scourged, and branded with hot irons on the face with S.S., or "Sower of Sedition."

Stephen Wren was the bearer of this news, —while he deplored his ill-fortune in having to command the party of soldiers told off for this distressing duty. Alice, with Harriet Allen, listening to these details with swimming eyes and wringing hands, could not help appealing to Wren: "You in command! Oh, Stephen, then you could contrive or help some escape! Pray do relieve our misery!"

Wren, lest he should wholly lose the good-will of Alice at this crisis, was compelled to appear favorable. "I would do so gladly, but I fear it would be impossible,—at least before the pillory."

"Well," said Alice, catching at his exception, "that is the least part—to stand and be gazed upon."

"That is not all," answered Wren; "I don't think you or I would like to stand by them."

"I would like to stand anywhere to be with my father," cried Alice,—"living, suffering, or dying. But perhaps after the pillory you could save them from the worst. Oh, Stephen, think what gratitude you would earn!"

"If I do," said cunning Stephen, drawing Alice aside, "will you promise to look favorably on my desires?" Alice now saw the peril she had risked, and for a moment an angry refusal was on her lips, but she restrained herself. They were interrupted at this point, and parted in mutual misconception.

The fearful day arrived. Tombland Green, which had so long witnessed the happy festivities of all classes, together with their beloved minister, and which had been the sacred pathway to blessed worship in the adjoining church for so many years, was now prepared for a very different spectacle. A sort of hustings, draped in black, was erected, with its back to the Close, and surrounded by a stout rail to keep back the crowd. Already many of the poorer people were loitering there watching the preparations, and generally with eyes of regret rather than pleasure. Most of the houses had windows and blinds closed as for a general mourning. In one of these houses, poor Ann, by turns dissolved in tears and spurred to rage, had given her poor Will an uneasy time. "If I were a man," she cried out, "I would tear down the vile pillory and rescue the prisoners. Why don't you do something?—you are all cowards! Where's Master George now?—and Master Allen? Won't they strike for Alice's own father and his friend?"

"What can we do?" muttered Will.

"Oh," said his wife, "I would get a heap of stones beside the pillory, and beat away the crowd."

"What if the soldiers wouldn't let you? But we do hope to get them away after the pillory."

"After they have been disgraced and half-killed with stones and filth, and can hardly crawl away! Oh, if I could only do something!"

"It would be something," said Will, "to save their ears and faces from the hot irons."

"Save them! You talk, but you'll never do it. Oh, oh!—I see the good parson in the hands of the torturers—the blood streaming—the life going!—There is no help,—woe's me! woe's me!" Will tried consolation, but then she became furious; so he went off to consult with his master and others on plans of rescue.

At length a movement was perceptible in the direction of the Palace. The military drum and fife were then heard. A crowd preceded their approach. Two or three horse soldiers were seen, commanded by Captain Wren. There was also a troop of infantry. The prisoners were in their clerical Geneva dress, and their arms were closely bound. They were forced to march rapidly through the crowd to the back of the pillory, to mount the stairs, and to submit to have their heads and hands inserted through holes in a stout plank across the platform, about their height, the upper part of which was lifted to admit them, and then shut and padlocked over them. The grotesque appearance they presented in front of the unpitying mob, and the fearfully strained position of their bodies, constituted the terror of this odious punishment. Two horse soldiers kept guard just below them before the pillory. At first the two clergymen seemed to feel their shame very acutely, and scarcely looked up from the ground, while they trembled from cold and excitement. But by degrees, finding that they met with so little animosity, they stood as erect as possible. Gazing over the gathering multitude to the familiar houses around, they often lifted their eyes in faith to the justice reigning above the skies.

Presently, however, there mixed with the crowd a number of half-drunken roughs and bigoted emissaries, whose mission it was by passionate cries and wanton acts to stir the people to the usual cruelty. Shouts of "Hurrah for Bishop Wren!" "Down with canting snufflers!" began to be heard. Wild youths then aimed vegetables, filth, stones, pieces of

wood, in the direction of the pillory, and the shower of missiles often smote hard the persons of the undefended victims, who were soon covered with dirt, bruised and bleeding. Among the most furious of the assailants was Jacob Freeman, who had brought a tub of vile things to throw at his old clergyman, as he cried, "Hurrah for the Bishop!—down with the Puritans!" At last, a piece of brick thrown by him struck Bridge just under the eye, and caused blood to stream. The good man cried out, "The Lord help me! O Jacob, Jacob!—when your father died, and you were left an orphan, who educated you, and helped your mother to maintain her family?—and this is my reward!" Some of the mob hearing this, gathered round Jacob Freeman, and hustled him, raving with fury, right off the Green, after which the shower of missiles lessened.

Just then a powerfully built brewer appeared with a great pailful of pigs'-wash and soapsuds, which he aimed full at the clergyman, shouting, "See, I'll wash the dirt off you!" Unfortunately, the man's arm caught a neighbor's coat, which spoilt his aim, and the whole vile contents came down on the unlucky head of the horse soldier who was sitting in immovable grandeur at his post, and covered him and his horse from head to heel with most unsavory perfume. The horse took fright, and, plunging and rearing, threw his rider heavily,—who, having been a little cleansed by his comrades, remounted, but with evident fear of some further catastrophe.

These accidents caused much laughter, and abated the disposition of those present for further harshness, when suddenly a sight of singular interest engaged all attention;—a young girl dressed in white was seen ascending the rude pillory, crossing it, and then taking her stand between the two sufferers, while, clinging to her father's lifted arm, she stood right in front of the rough multitude, and looked steadily with her innocent eyes on the witnesses of her father's humiliation. The words of Wren, unintentionally uttered, "How would you like to stand beside them?" had sunk into a heroic heart, and borne this fruit, though the secret intention was kept from every friend. Nothing could have pleaded more effectively the cause of the sufferers. Men looked at the slight girl through a mist of admiring tears. As she stood there, an unbound and willing sufferer, the whisper went round, "It is his daughter!—'tis Alice Bridge, the Flower of Tombland!" Not only did all indignities cease, but through the whole City the word went to "Come and see the brave girl stand by her father in the pillory!" Some secret friends threw bunches of sweet flowers before Alice and her companions. This change of missiles was soon imitated, till the dark pillory was covered with a carpet, and festooned with garlands of bright flowers of sympathy and esteem for those so unrighteously suffering. New spectators arrived from moment to moment, and stood spell-bound with wonder and interest as the hours of exposure slowly waned away.

"Before the removal, Captain Wren rode up by the pillory, and said to Alice, "Bravely done!—who would have thought it? But now you must go home."

"Yes," said her father; "she has been my angel, but she must go no further."

"I cannot leave you, father;—I am able. But if I go, Stephen, will you keep your promise?"

Wren being powerfully wrought on at the moment by admiration, and smarting also under some rebukes he had received at home, nodded, saying, "I will try."

The procession was re-formed, the jailers returning to the Palace. The prisoners, weary and wounded, were allowed to walk but slightly bound between the soldiers. As they all turned from the Green toward the market, the immense crowd made the passage difficult. At the corner, Ann was waiting to seize Alice and take her home. Alice whispered to her father, as she kissed him, "Father, I could not go if I did not know you will be rescued. Be of good cheer." Then she slipped away, just meeting George, who, with his eyes full of tears, said, "Alice, I could worship you!—glorious girl!"

"Never mind now, George: Stephen promises to give the occasion."

"Have no faith in that wretch," said George.

"Only this time. Watch, George; and if the soldiers pass forward, and the prisoners are left a moment, be ready."

"That will I," replied George. This time he was not to be disappointed. He, John Allen, Herbert Hervey, and Gerhardt had massed their men at the corner of Wensum Street: even at that moment, a shout was raised of some riot ahead which caused obstruction of the way, and a command fell from Wren for the soldiers to advance. In the hurry the prisoners fell some yards into the rear of their guards: the crowd filled up the intervening space. The prisoners were at once seized by the friendly watchers, mounted on horses, hurried on board the boats, and with a favorable wind were soon beyond pursuit. Erelong they were hidden with friends in the great seaport of Yarmouth, where they might be safe till a vessel could be provided to bear them into a Dutch exile.

CHAPTER XXII.

ESCAPE TO ROTTERDAM.

"'Twas moonset at starting, yet while we drew near
Lokeren, the cocks crew, and twilight dawned clear;
At Boom a great yellow star came out to see;
At Duffield 'twas morning as plain as could be;
From Mechlin church steeple we heard the half chime;
So Joris broke silence with 'Yet there is time.'"

BROWNING.

A FEW days had passed since the clergymen's successful escape, when again in a small room in the Bishop's Palace there had met Dr. Green, Stephen Wren, and in addition to them a third, Black Joe, a Pocthorpe fellow ready for any evil enterprise.

"Now you know the Bishop's orders," said Green. "Can you find men to do the business?"

"What! escort two ladies with their baggage to Yarmouth? I should think so."

"Yes," added Stephen; "but then you are also to track out old Bridge in his hiding, and bring them all back again."

"Easy, my boy!—then the ladies are only a decoy?" answered Joe.

"I had as lief myself they all got away," added Green; "but the Bishop won't hear of it. He is furious at their recent escape. He would have branded Bridge with his own hand, I believe. You, Stephen, have felt the weight of his anger."

"I think I have! We must not fail this time."

"I could easy get 'em all right away, your honor. I knows Jem Brace the smuggler."

"That will not do," interrupted Stephen; "you are not to get them away, but to bring them all here—parson and all. But no harm to the ladies, or I'll have you flogged."

"Not the least bit, your honor;—only don't talk of flogging,—that hurts my feelings!"

"Well, don't blab, and don't drink. Have a cart ready for the baggage. I will bring the ladies to-morrow morning early."

About the same time a colloquy took place between George and Alice, with her mother, concerning their proposed escape.

"George," said the mother, "Alice tells me that Stephen Wren has been offering to find means for our getting to Yarmouth to-morrow; but of course we rely on you."

George appeared amazed, and slowly replied, "Does he really offer his help? That is strange, for I find myself sadly helpless, much as I long to serve you. What does Wren propose?"

"He will be here," said Mistress Bridge, "early to-morrow with escort and carriages, and will see us beyond the gates, and send us safely to my husband."

"Very fair," answered George; "just what I would have done. To refuse, would excite suspicion. I think you must accept the offer."

"Why, George," said Alice, "you advise this! Suppose he betrays my father! You don't trust him?"

"I don't know," George replied, rather sadly. "I think it will be the best way. You know, Alice, that I counsel against myself."

The astonishment of the ladies was very great, and George fell in their estimation, however reluctantly.

Mistress Bridge said, "Must Stephen know my husband's hiding-place?"

"On no account until you are in Yarmouth," replied George; "be very careful of that. Let me see your luggage, and have it ready for to-morrow." So he piled it all in a small outhouse across the yard, in readiness.

"Farewell, I shall know all that happens to you, and be near, though not seen." The leave-taking was not so cordial as usual, for it was impossible to shake off the impression that George was failing them. When he had departed, Alice knelt with streaming eyes beside her mother, and poured out her sorrowful heart. "Mother, I thought if every one on earth forsook us, George would be true. What can this mean—to turn us over to Stephen, whom he hates?"

"My dear child, hard as it is, I seem to feel he may be right after all. But we have no other course."

Here Stephen Wren appeared on the scene, awkward and disagreeable. "Well, ladies, I hope I am to be honored by your confidence. It is against my father, but there is nothing I would not do for you."

"Sir, we are grateful to you, and in our painful position we have scarcely any choice," said Mistress Bridge.

Stephen then left them, and the day passed in preparations.

A startling surprise awaited them in the morning, when the servants told them that their baggage had been stolen in the night. This seemed a terrible beginning to their adventures, and they could not help connecting George with the event, as he himself had put it away. They had not much time, however, to consider the strange loss, as Stephen came with his retainers, and the party rode safely, under his protection, outside the Norwich gates. The day was cold and gloomy: a bitter east wind direct from the sea blew sharp and damp in their faces. They were leaving the pretty rural road and the undulating country for the bleak level sandflats through which a perfectly straight road for some nine or ten miles leads in a monotonous progress to Yarmouth.

When they entered the village of Acle, halfway on the road, a sailor-like man came riding up, and introduced himself to the leader by the password, calling himself Tough Jack. He represented that he was sent forward by Stephen Wren, whom he had met. He was a seafaring person on his way to the port, and by his yarns he soon put the men into good humor. At Acle and other places he treated the convoy to ale, so that he was ere long on the best terms with them. As they entered the outskirts of Yarmouth, Black Joe came to the ladies to ask where the person they were to meet was to be found. They gave the address, and on inquiry were directed to a small house jutting on the quay. On asking for John Hardy, the name which Bridge had assumed, they found him within. His friend Allen had left him for awhile to arrange for his children's removal. After telling each other what had happened, the Rector said, "But we have no time to lose: the boat lies at the quay; let us enter it, and slip out of the river to our vessel."

They were about to follow this advice, with thanks to the men who had escorted them so far, when Black Joe stepped forward with drunken gravity, saying, "Much obliged to you, but we can't part so easy. You mustn't go out of England;—our orders is to take you back to Norwich."

"Back to Norwich!" exclaimed Bridge. "Who has betrayed us?" The ladies were ready to faint with grief, when Tough Jack came forward, and said, "Here's a coil, masters!—I thought we were to help these ladies off to sea. Why should you spoil their voyage? —What warrant have you for arresting them, mates?"

"We are to send to the watch of the town to do that," replied Black Joe. "Here, Jem, go you to the watch of Yarmouth, and give this slip of paper, and say, 'Here we are.' Be easy, ladies,—you shall have no harm from Black Joe, although he loves a gentle doe, as he has often said."

"Well," said Tough Jack, "we shall have a half-hour's rest. The ladies can come into this side room." Tough Jack was uttering a few words of comfort, when Alice suddenly seized his arm, and looked into his face with horror, exclaiming, "Oh, it is you!—what have you brought us to? George, save us even now!"

Some of the men stopped drinking on hearing this, and came to the door to listen suspiciously, when George (for it was he), looking warningly, replied, "Mistress, don't you remember poor George Wilson, to whom you were once so kind in Norwich when he was sick?" The men, hearing this, were content to settle to their drink again. Fearing the speedy return of the watch, George now gently opened the window of the inner room, which was on the ground floor, and led them all out to the quay, and into the boat. Four young fellows leaped into it after him, and began to pull hard, in order to pass the mouth of the river before the watch could close the gates. At this mo-

ment Alice detected all their stolen luggage safely stowed in the boat, and pointing it out to her mother, exclaimed, "It was George, after all, who did it! He has outwitted them all! Why did we doubt him?"

George himself was not far off, and, overhearing these words, reached his hand, whispering, "Alice, you nearly betrayed me. But we have no time to talk now. Heaven grant we are not now too late at the river mouth." They could presently hear the watch knocking at the house they had just quitted; then there was a shout, and hurrying to the river-side. It was getting dark, but they could see their pursuers running along the bank. Now the runners had to make a long round. The river mouth at Gorleston was very near; but the watch cut off a corner, and were at the pier-head, speaking to the keeper to close the sluice-gates. The gates began to turn slowly. "Only a yard or two more to pull through!—Just room to pass, and avoid being crushed. Through!—safe through! Pull on! See, there is the vessel all ready!—her white sails glisten in the gloaming. Nearer, nearer! See the Fleming's tall figure on the deck!—Hurrah! Give way, men! Hoist up the ladies! All safe,—thank God! Let the boat stay for me."

George, thus speaking, climbed on board to receive the warm and wondering thanks of those whom he had so cleverly rescued.

Black Joe and his disappointed fellows sulkily returned on the Norwich road, with muttered oaths and displeasure. Quoth Black Joe, "They would not face the peril themselves, the scoundrels!—they were after that dashing gal. I'm not sorry they have lost her. Who was yonder Tough Jack, I wonder? Don't let him cross my path in a hurry! And if these varlets crow too loud over us, boys, we're strong enough to floor 'em. We shall never see the shine of their money, I trow. 'Traps often catch them as sets 'em'—eh!"

As they were thus conversing, and nearing the old city, in a lonely part of the road they espied the very persons they denounced, Green and Wren, who, eager for the success of their plot, had mounted and ridden a mile or two to meet the party. As they came near, they became wild with vexation, and Wren shouted, "How now, you rascals,—no prisoners! What have you done?"

Black Joe replied firmly, "There was a rescue,—we did all we could."

"Well, they are still in Yarmouth!" roared Wren. "We must get more force and pursue."

"Nay, sirs,—they are all on board ship bound for Holland."

"Dastards!" cried Wren, in high excitement, "fools! knaves!—you shall all be flogged in the market!"

Black Joe was enraged by the wanton threat. "Flogged!" he retorted; "boys, will you stand that? If there's any flogging, let it be done here. Seize their reins and dismount the villains. Now," said he, standing before the prisoners, "'tis you should be ashamed!—'twas the girl you were hot after, you wretches! You deserve to be stabbed. You shall be flogged!"

"Hands off there!" cried Wren; "mind how you touch the Bishop's son, fellows!"

"I am a clergyman,—don't touch me!" cried Green in unmanly terror.

"So much the worse," was the laughing, angry answer. "Call for the Bishop to see how we treat his people!" Without more words, the two men were half-stripped, and then lashed till they roared again. When Black Joe was content with his revenge, he ordered them to be well cooled and ducked in the river.

The band then withdrew, leading their victims' horses away, and left them to comfort each other as they best might on their wretched walk home.

"They'll keep it dark for their own sakes," said Black Joe.

After a long and rough voyage, the Fleming's vessel brought up at the handsome quay called the Boompjees,—so called from being built on piles (booms), lined with noble trees, and backed by fine mansions, which gives the first imposing impression of mercantile Rotterdam. They had not much opportunity for admiration of the city, for some *gens d'armes*, headed by a villainous-looking Englishman, appeared on board, and declared that they were all arrested as criminals flying from an English prison. In vain did they plead and explain;—they were taken into custody. To be led away by soldiers through the streets of a foreign land, under suspicion of crime, was indeed a miserable reception. The worthy magistrate, however, welcomed Van Diense, who was well known as a merchant in Rotterdam, and was most polite to the whole party. He called for the information from the English Consulate. After some delay, the English accuser stated that he was informed that these persons were charged with grave crimes against the ecclesiastical laws of England.

"Do you charge the ladies, Mijnheer?" asked the magistrate.

"No," replied the Consul's officer.

"What is the charge against the reverend gentleman? The ladies are honorably discharged."

"He is under his Bishop's sentence of excommunication."

"Wat wenscht ge? Is he guilty of any civil crime?"

"No,—not precisely," said the reluctant officer.

"Well, we here do not understand Bishops' law—so he may go free! You will give me a certificate that he was wrongfully arrested, and enters this city without the least blame. Dat is miju raad (that is my sentence)."

"Certainly, your worship."

After thanking the gracious magistrate, and receiving his "van harte gegroet" (hearty salutation), they withdrew; but they did not fail to contrast this first specimen of legal justice in Holland with the brow-beating, prejudice, and leaning to ecclesiastical authorities under which they knew they would have suffered in any English court.

After sleep and refreshment in the abode provided for them by the Fleming's care, they awoke to a lovely Sabbath, and found the Fleming ready to share their early breakfast.

He told his friends they would find the Dutch tongue more like English than any other in Europe. "How?" said Alice. "Give me a lesson. What are sun and moon?" "*De zon en de maan*," he answered. "And gold and silver?" she asked. "Are *goud* and *zilver*." "Wonderfully like!—tell me more." Then he told her *brood* for bread, *vleesch* for meat, *wijn* for wine; *geef mij* and *breng mij*, for give and bring me; *boter*, *melk*, and *suiker*, for butter, milk, and sugar; *tafel* and *glas*, for table and glass; *boek* and *huis*, for book and house; *hoed*, singularly, for hat, while head is *hoofd; broeders en zusters*, for brothers and sisters; *waarde vriend*, for dear friend; *vader*, *moeder*, *zoon*, *en dochter*, like enough; *eten* and *drinken*, for eating and drinking; *een*, *twee*, *drie*, *vier*, *vijf*, *zes*, *zeven*, *acht*, *negen*, *tien*, for the numerals: *zomer* and *winter*, for the seasons; *morgen* and *avond*, for morning and evening; "and," the teacher ended, "for the rest use the English with a broad continental accent, and you will soon be understood in all common things." "Delightful!" said Alice; "I am sure I shall soon unlock these strange sounds with the keys you have given me; but I shall never be other than an English woman, after all."

"If ever you are in doubt," added the Fleming, "say 'Hoe noemt ge dat?' (How call you that?) and the people will politely inform you."

"Where can we worship to-day?" cried Alice. "There are in this place only Popish mass houses, I suppose."

"What if I punish you," replied their friend, "by taking you to a little piece of England in this very city, and asking you to beg your father to give a sermon to us all in Rotterdam this morning?"

"Is it possible!" replied Alice; and turning to her father, "Father, you will? I thought you could never preach here. What a nice place Holland must be!"

"But," said the Rector, with a sense of what was due to his Anglican position, "how can we worship where there is no liturgy and no Episcopal ordination?"

"Pardon me," said the Fleming, "I should have thought you had had enough of bishops for the present. There is no Episcopal worship except the Roman Catholic in this city."

"But will Presbyterians receive us, and allow me to preach?"

"With delight, I am sure, as you are a Calvininist; were you an Arminian, even they are not yet so charitable."

"But what sort of service can it be?"

"Much what Paul or John would have held. We have to go to primitive customs, and to read the New Testament afresh, in order to get back to Christ's own regulations," was the Fleming's reply.

"But what is their order?" said the Rector.

The Fleming only answered, "Come and see."

So they went together up a grand street, and turned into the Haringvleet, which had a haven or broad canal in the middle filled with vessels, and was lined on either side with well-grown trees. Here they paused at a large building, which was then, and still is, the English Presbyterian church. Entering its porch, they beheld a large and lofty hall, well lighted, with dark oak paneling, pulpit, and raised stalls, and a small congregation quietly awaiting the beginning of worship. A grave divine was seated at the teachers' end, to whom the Fleming introduced the English clergyman as the Rev. Hugh Peters, founder of this Church, who entreated his reverend brother to aid in the service.

After a short pause, the elder offered prayer, during which the strangers began to feel at home in addressing together the same God, particularly as special thanks and intercession were spontaneously made for them, as exiles driven forth by persecution for Christ's sake,—a personal sympathy which the freedom of their worship allowed. After the psalm, Peters read a passage from the Bible, and explained it tersely and practically. The Rector took his text from Matthew xviii. 20: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them;" and as he thanked the congregation for their prayers, craved their good-will for the exiles as future residents in the town, and then freely exulted in the comfortable promise of the Lord's presence, even under the most solitary and unfavorable circumstances, all seemed to realize the fulfillment of his text and the Lord's presence.

On leaving he cordially saluted Peters and his colleague, who invited him to benefit them with his valuable instructions as often as possible. He was introduced to several English refugees like himself, who all welcomed and thanked him heartily. These were the people whose reasons for very reluctantly leaving their native land are thus described in the old Norwich manuscripts of that date kept by the church over which Bridge was pastor, which say, "The urging of Popish ceremonies, and divers innovated injunctions in the worship and service of God; the suspending and silencing of divers godly ministers, and the persecuting of godly men and women by Bishop Wren and his instruments in Norwich, Yarmouth, and other places, caused divers of the godly people to pass over into Holland to enjoy freedom from superstitious human inventions in God's worship."

The Rector in returning home expressed his agreeable surprise to the Fleming at the beauty, freedom, and order of the worship they had just enjoyed. The Fleming said he never had heard a sermon from him in England so hearty and irresistible. "There you always seemed, though so good a preacher, in light and invisible fetters."

Bridge observed, "I find I have a good deal to learn here. I must inquire how these ecclesiastical changes have come about and are supported."

"Oh, it was like heaven this morning!" exclaimed Alice. "After all our frights, to have a welcome from such good people, and to have a service so warm and interesting! I really begin to like Holland very much. I expected to be wretched, and to lose all Christian comforts;—and I think I never loved Him so much as this morning!"

"Yes, and I also have been refreshed greatly," said her mother; "but I thought of dear old St. George's, and the Sherwoods, and Hopes, and Ridgeleys, and others in their pews,—and that dreadful Dr. Green petrifying them! Verily the lines are fallen to us in pleasant places."

Rotterdam interested the exiles the more they saw of it. Its manifest prosperity and commercial bustle,—its noble river or arm of the sea, called the Maas, and the Rotte, a smaller branch, with its havens or canals, were all objects of admiration. Thus they settled down in a new home. Two things tried their health,—the peat fires, and the constant pervading smell of peat smoke in the close air of the rooms;—and the impure water, the supply of which was drawn from the havens, which received the sewage of the place as well as of the vessels in the port.

Bridge soon had the offer of support as pastor of the church he had first preached in, though it was some time before his scruples

gave way. During that time he often worked as clerk in Van Diense's employ. His wife and daughter took as pupils the children of some of the refugees, and of others; so that they wanted for nothing. Other English refugees pursued their ordinary vocations, or obtained service in the docks. Labor was the law of the republic, and usually it was well paid. They missed the country walks and breezy hills of old Norwich, for after crossing the *cinglen*, or water-belt, or dyke surrounding all Dutch towns, there were roads with endless poplar rows, and wide canals or lakes,—and all flat as a table.

Now and then letters arrived from England. They heard of grievous complaints against the new Rector. Alice kept up a correspondence with Edward from Oxford, by which she found he was growing more and more devoted to the Church policy of Laud, and to the Royal cause. He related the fate which had befallen poor Dr. Osbaldeston (or Old Baldy), some of whose letters, freely satirizing Archbishop Laud, had fallen into that primate's hands. Osbaldeston was sentenced to stand in the pillory, opposite his own school, with his ears nailed to it; but he wisely fled this cruel sentence, leaving a note to say that "should his Grace want him, he had gone beyond Canterbury." Edward seemed to think all this persecution justifiable, and he earnestly entreated the exiles not to fall away from their adhesion to the English Church by reason of their trials.

At last a letter came from George with the happy news that he was crossing the ocean in order to go to the continental armies for practice in soldiering. In cypher (taught by the Fleming) he said a whole emigration was to come with him. This gave the exiles no small joy, with some anxiety how to provide for all these in comfort. The Fleming at once arranged for his vessel to proceed, and await their arrival. The Fleming was interested in promoting all the arrangements, the more so that the Lady Gabrielle, who had taken his advice and escaped to Brussels, now gave some hints of coming to Rotterdam to see his friends, if he would fetch her. Now, as George must go to Brussels on his way, he hoped to take him there, and return with Gabrielle and his sister. And what might not grow out of that? Oh, Love's dreamland!

CHAPTER XXIII.

ALICE DISLIKES A SOLDIER'S LIFE.

"Jetz bei der Lampe mildem Schein
Gehst du wohl in dein Kammerlein
Und schicks't dien Nachgebet zum Herrn
Auch fur den Liebsten in der Fern.

Doch wenn du traurig bist und weinst
Mich von Gefahr umringen meinst
Sei ruhig ich bin in Gottes Hut
Er liebt ein treu Soldatenblut."

HAUF.

THE Rev. Hugh Peters soon called on Bridge. After the first explanation, Peters said, "You are sent of the Lord, and *must* take up this needful work."

"How?" exclaimed Bridge. "I am a devoted son of the English Church, though under this temporary separation."

"So was I also; but we are sent here to learn the way of God more perfectly. I see now that in England," continued Peters, "we were in the shadow of death, and our national Church is a mere branch of the great apostacy. If we return, it must be to purge it thoroughly."

"But, dear sir, I cannot follow your strong censures."

"Ah, you only see men as trees walking;—the veil is on your heart. You have the spell and glamour of the old habits about you,—so had I; and it cost me much sorrow and pain to cast them off. Going through the fire can hardly be worse than the crushing of reason and pride and traditional habit, and the coming out into bare novelties and despised Puritanisms. It was a mortification of the whole soul—a cutting off of the right hand; but how necessary and right, I feel more and more every day."

"I confess that I have much to learn and unlearn," said Bridge; "and I am anxious to examine Church principles afresh, and will gladly enjoy your longer experience."

This led to long conversations and Scripture readings between the divines, in which Bridge, like many others, severed from former prepossessions, and brought closely in contact with Apostolic institutions in the New Testament, ceased to regard Episcopacy as the only true Church form, and to admit the advantage of Scriptural simplicity in modes of worship. Gradually he was prepared for exercising the Gospel ministry—at least while his banishment lasted—in the methods open to him at the time, and to feel called of God to accept the pastorate over this pure and free Church. He was introduced by Peters and the Fleming to many Dutch leaders and *dominés* (as the clergy are called there), with whom he could converse in Latin before he acquired their own tongue. He made journeys also to the pleasant capital, the Hague, where he found English settlers; as also to Amsterdam, where was a large church under Clyfton; and to Leyden, where was the church over which Robinson had been pastor, and from which the first New England settlers went forth under Johnson and Smyth. Thus by degrees he attained a considerable position, and was drawn into fellowship with English clergy who had more or less broken with their old ideas of Church constitution, and adopted from the Bible the new ones which were destined to revive religion in England and America.

The return of the Fleming's vessel, long expected, at last occurred. The quay was lined by a number of friends, who extended a warm welcome to the large shipful of pilgrims.

Among the first to land were Will Barnard and his active wife, who, revived from the sickly effects of the voyage by seeing her old nursling Alice, could only gasp out, "Oh my!—I couldn't bear Norwich after you was gone;—and that odious serpent in the pulpit too!"

Ann next drew forth a slim figure hidden behind her, with her face in her hands, who proved to be pretty Fanny. She, hearing of the migration, quitted her aunt to re-enter the Fleming's service. Alice gave her a warm reception, and Ann said, "There, take your hands down,—all are friends here. Will, you need not be comforting her;—you men ruined her with your silly flatteries. But she's come to her senses: all will come right some day. Others will be arriving here, now we have come to Holland."

Greatly to the comfort of Bridge and the other refugees, the Rev. Thomas Allen, his attached friend and fellow-sufferer, with his lively and sensible young people, John, Jane, and Harriet, accompanied the rest. Alice and the girls embraced warmly.

"Can you exist here?" said lively Harriet. "I expected to find you all turned into herrings."

Jane observed, "We have been learning some Dutch words from the sailors. They did not compliment us, for they called us three—*drie*."

Then came the Ridgeleys,—the father composed as usual, but the two young ladies excited, and the mother convulsively saying, "Oh, my dear minister! do I see you again? Tell me, have we really got across that dreadful sea at last?"

The eldest daughter added comically, "That Dr. Green, with his ugly looks, fairly drove us away. 'Tis whispered he has one wife too many."

Now appeared the neat and stylish Dame Norris, smiling blandly. "Ah, you look less altered than I supposed. Do you speak Dutch yet,—or is old English not forgotten?"

Hannah Vores leant on her brother's arm, who also led along the impulsive Grace Friend. The latter exclaimed, "Oh, blessed meeting!—How good of you all to meet us! It is like seeing angels unawares!—so sweet! so cheering!"

The other stammered, "Yes, very good,—that is, very miserable. They told me we should never see the party we were looking for. We are quite exhausted,—I'm sure not fit to be seen. Where is our home? Poverty and content,—but 'tis in the best cause." So she dried her tears, and looked brightly round, amid the quiet smiles of most of her hearers.

Last of all came George, full of eagerness to meet his friends, only rather hampered by having a fine troop of twenty young fellows of his band who came with him. These were the forerunners of many more who were pledged to follow them in due time to fields of bravery for the Protestant cause. "Welcome, dear George," said Bridge and his wife. Alice only replied by a pressure of her hand, and flush of eye and cheek, to the greeting, "So glad to see you, Alie dear,—shall follow you as soon as possible." Having settled this large and valuable importation, in an hour or two he and Van Diense came to the Pastor's house.

George then told how matters had become worse and worse in old England, relating the horrid cruelties to Burton, Bastwick, and Pyrnne; the brutal tyranny of Strafford in Ireland; the attempts to force prelacy on the Scotch, which had roused a successful insurrection; and the continued suppression of Parliament, and abasement of the nation. He also told of Bishop Wren's abominable severities in Norwich, of Father Christopher's disappearance, and of the wretch Dr. Green, who was obliged to fly to escape exposure as a spy and immoral hypocrite.

As the Fleming and the Rector went into some discussion on these matters, the young people drew aside for a little private intercourse.

"What an age it is since we parted, Alie!" George began with.

"And now you are going away so soon;—how soon?"

"I fear, ere long, for I have my young soldiers with me."

"How can you draw them from home, to suffer, and perhaps to die? Oh, George, why will you give your life up to fighting?"

"I am sorry, dear Alie, you look at it so. I am not suited for a merchant—still less for a clergyman."

"Why not, George? What can be so noble and so useful?"

"But I could not be a Jesuit priest, and those clergy who resemble your father are all silenced. I can be a useful Christian, even though I am a soldier. I shall have a band of godly soldiers under me."

"George, I cannot bring my heart to find interest in this sort of life. It is a bar between us. I wish you would forsake it."

"Alie, my friends do not think so. My father says, 'Well done, my boy! England will soon need good soldiers.' Cromwell urges me to proceed. The Fleming and your own father entirely approve my purpose. But there is no judgment I should so wish to please as yours, Alie. Pray try to give me some encouragement."

"I do try hard, George; but my soul yearns for a life of charity and benevolence. I cannot bear the shedding of blood, or wounding others. I would rather nurse and heal the sick. I can hardly wish even you God-speed."

"Oh, Alie, you wring my heart. What can I do? You are a woman, I am a man. Men's work is often sterner; and in these times liberty and religion are, like maidens, sorely exposed to armed foes who require brave and fearless champions."

"Still, I would that others took that part rather than you, my brother and friend."

"The struggle, Alie, may be but short. I must play the man till it be over. Then will come peace and freedom, home quiet and Church security. Or I may perish in the conflict. Then, Alie, you will not deny your sympathy at the last."

"Heaven forbid! But why do we fall upon themes of difference when we are so little together? I will essay no more to move your purpose."

"Yet, Alice, say it not as one who withdraws her heart and severs herself from her old friend."

"Not so; but I frankly own my real feelings. Now let us be friends, as ever."

It was easy to say this, but the old oneness was broken; both were saddened and restrained; implicit confidence was weakened; a serious difference in the object of life had for the present placed a screen between these two hearts.

George betook himself that evening to his friend Ann, to carry a letter to her young lady, offering to give up his purpose of becoming a soldier if she still required it. That faithful woman exclaimed, "Letter!—I don't care to fetch and carry, Master George. You are free enough with your tongue: better to speak."

"This is a very important matter: an old friend like you will do us a service?"

"Yes, if I was sure it was a service; but matters don't look well between you. If I knew what it was—— You used to trust me once, Master George."

"Well, Ann, you see Alice does not like my going to the wars; and so, to please her, I am thinking of giving it up and going home."

"Give it up! I'd like my Will to stay too, but I shouldn't think the better of him. Then the young men that came with you! Master George, 'tis the first time I ever saw you show the white feather.

"But it's all for Alice,—I can't bear to cross her."

"You're on the wrong tack, Master George. This is not the way with women. You should

follow your own conscience, — she'll come round. I'll take your letter, but I'll e'en give my lady a piece of my mind first."

That night, therefore, Ann had a conference with Alice of some interest.

Ann began by saying, "Darling, you don't look so well as I should like. Now Master George is here, I thought you would be as bright as a cricket."

"But, Ann, he is soon going, and I don't like a soldier's life. Why couldn't he stay and find something peaceful to do here? My heart will not go after him to slaughter and battle-fields, where he may die, and the young men he has drawn after him. Ann, you would not like your husband to go as a soldier."

"Bless your life, Mistress Alice, but he is going! He would not forsake Master George. I don't like the risk, but somehow I like the brave spirit. He says that soon the people of England will rise against Laud and Strafford. He is going to learn how to take part in it with his master, and so bring you all back again."

"Yes; but, Ann, they will get rough and wild and ungodly in the camp life, and be spoilt for home and all works of goodness."

"I don't know that, mistress. My uncle was a sailor who fought hard in Queen Bess's time against Spain, and a more gentle, pious, good creature never was at home. These lions in war get a good deal of the lamb when they come home."

"But, Ann, if he loved me as he says, do you think he would persist in what he knows I disapprove? Would he not be more yielding?"

"Well, mistress, suppose he was to come and kneel at your feet, and tell you that he would do as you like—break up his plans, and go home and live privately in Norwich, bearing the gibes and reproaches, and when the great rising comes take no part in it:—do you think he wouldn't pine and die?"

"I never said a man was to sit quiet when strife began. But why need he go to foreign battles now?"

"Bad luck to them if they stand to fight without training and knowledge. They would only be cut down in the first skirmish."

"There is something in that, Ann. Besides, now he has gone so far, and he has pledged himself to these youths."

"Yes, and to my Will among them. Must they break such promises, and just go back and meet Norwich laughter as well as they can? They'll have shown their love to us, at all events."

"Ann, I suspect you are half-laughing at me. I don't see well how they can retract, and I should not like to feel I had forced such a sacrifice."

"Oh, you know Master George would just do anything for you;—you need never doubt it. I dare say he's now planning to give it all up; but how he'll live afterwards I can't fancy."

"Surely, Ann, it is much nobler to live to comfort the poor and to serve God than to swagger and swear in a barracks."

"Tilly-vally, mistress!—that's very well for you and me, as God has made soft, with hearts of butter; but these men-fellows must live after their rougher kind, and a good soldier is better than a lying lawyer or a cheating priest."

"But there are noble priests, Ann, living self-sacrificing and heroic lives."

"They seem fearful hard and cruel against their fellow-creatures, and the better they are the more mischief they do. Do you take your own line, and leave Master George to his, and I'll wager he will do you no dishonor—no, nor my Will either. I'd like to see them smite down one day the tyrants who drive us from England, and who are murdering and torturing those who remain behind, like the wretches who tore off godly Mr. Prynne's ears in the pillory. Don't you hate them too, mistress,—you, who went and stood by your father so bravely?"

"I think you should go with Will, in man's clothes, Ann; you are quite a trooper in heart."

"Nay, mistress, but things is now that wrong that many a well-nurtured youth like your George must leave home awhile, and practice in the school of soldiers, so that poor bleeding England may have some to stand up for her in her worst hour."

"Ann, you are quite a poetess—a Miriam or Deborah!"

"I'll warrant, mistress, you would be braver and more high-hearted than I when the real need came. Is it Edward that puts all these cross notions into your mind?"

"I believe I am sorry for Edward. He is all alone."

"Poor Edward was always a bit of a ninny."

"And George rather a willful braggart, Ann."

"And you never knew how to choose between them; and it's my belief you never will, but will live and die an old maid for their sakes."

This little fencing-match gave a useful vent to pent-up feelings. Ann took back the letter to George, and said, "Master George, I sounded her about your breaking your pledges, and she was more indignant at that than with your soldiering."

So when George next met Alice, she said, "George, as you must go, I am glad that Will Barnard goes with you."

"Alie, I was just giving it all up."

"Oh, George, that would distress me more. I must still admit that the soldier's life does not suit my tastes, but I know that in evil times painful duties are none the less needful or honorable. You will serve England and the Gospel even on the battle-field."

"I hope so, Alie. Do you think the youths who follow me are going to wanton and rob? They are all pledged to virtue, and to fight only for the Protestant faith. Let England be once free, under her own Parliaments and reformed Church, and we will disband with joy. So follow us with your gentle prayers."

"So I shall, dear George: even in spite of myself, I begin to feel you are following a good motive."

"Now, Alie, I shall go twice armed, and full of hope."

CHAPER XXIV.

BRUSSELS AND RHEINFELD.

"Sie pflüchte ein Wiesenblumelein,
'Herr Konrad nimm und denke mein,'
Da kusst Herr Konrad ihren Mund
Die Blume trug sein Helm zur Stund.

In ganzen Lande klang der ruhm
Des Ritters von der Wiesenblum'
Und in Turnei und in der schlacht
Ward hoch vor allen sein gedacht."

MAX VON OER.

AFTER staying only a day for refreshment, George, with the Fleming and the troop of attendants, rode out of the town *en route* for Brussels, and so onward to the seat of war.

The French were now in alliance with the brave Swedes, under the Duke of Saxe-Weimar, or Bernhard, the pupil of Gustavus Adolphus. The Swedes had bought the alliance of France by promising Richelieu (then the real ruler of that nation) to conquer and hand over to her Alsace from Germany. For this purpose the Duke was attacking Rheinfeld and Brisac, and the fortresses of the Brisgau.

A few days of hard riding brought them by the grand city of Antwerp, along the flat coast road to Brussels, then the residence of a gay Court. The Countess Von Berghem had arranged to receive the whole party. So soon as they were a little refreshed, Hannchen Van Diense visited them in their *salon*, and announced that the Lady Gabrielle would soon follow. The quiet Hannchen of Norwich middle life was transformed into an elegant lady of fashion, with the same calm mildness of manner, but with the added grace of courtly array. She rejoiced to see George, inquired after his parents and Edward, as well as the Bridges, and specially Alice—"your white lily," she added smiling.

"Yes," said George, "white and fair as ever; but she does not like a soldier's uniform."

"Oh, she will learn in these times to forgive that, George," was Hannchen's reply.

The Fleming appeared lost in grave thought, when his sister roused him, saying, "Philip, are you ready to be squire of dames to courtly ladies? I assure you Gabrielle is in earnest, although she dislikes foggy, peat-smelling Rotterdam. It is a great compliment to you."

"To you, rather, my accomplished and attractive sister," he replied.

The door opened, and Gabrielle's small, striking figure was visible. Her quick eye took in the whole scene as she glided toward them. She welcomed the Fleming with marked courtesy; and turning to George, said, "Pray present to me this young English soldier;—I love young officers. Monsieur George Sherwood—is that your name?—be most welcome to my Dutch home. Van harte gegroet."

George was evidently dazzled by her beauty and marked notice of him. He knelt and kissed her hand, saying, "Lady, the English Court lost its fairest gem when you withdrew."

"Why, you were but a boy when the Queen came to your school with some of us maids of honor. Your brother recited a Latin address, and made love to the Lady Eva; but you and I had a word about an absent friend."

"It was a vision of glory never to be forgotten by school-boys; but you looked sad to what you do to-day, lady."

"Sad!—you did not say so then. I was a fairy and an angel, and what not. Philip, my old friend, how do these English fugitives at Rotterdam? I wish they could come here. But you must stay here a few days. I will leave you now to meet again in the *salon*, where you will find a few friends. *Vaarwel.*"

She took Hannchen with her; and then George said, "Oh, my friend, you may well love her!—such sweetness and life—she is charming indeed!"

"Yes, a charming sister," gravely replied Van Diense.

"Nonsense!" said George; "I saw her eye on you when you were not looking."

"She loves the gay world and its luxury too well, George."

"The stream of love is full of obstructions," said the youth: "one fair lady dislikes a soldier's coat, and another a merchant's drab. Perhaps they may think otherwise while I seek honor in the wars, and you are protector of the journey—but *nil desperandum!*"

The dinner was magnificent, and the room full of distinguished guests. The Fleming knew many of them, and entered into free political converse such as England did not then allow. The Lady Gabrielle had George by her, and took great notice of him. His frank shrewdness pleased her as much as her wit and beauty won on him. After dinner, the company dispersed over the various rooms and galleries. The Countess took George into her boudoir, for a fuller and closer chat. "Now, my English knight, are you entirely devoted to my service, or have you left your heart at home?"

"Lady, before I knew you——"

"Yes, there was some English cousin with whom you romped, and exchanged sixpences; but she has given way to eight or nine idols, surely?"

"Nay, lady, I am truer than you think."

"A miracle of constancy!—you were some years away at school. Is she at Norwich?"

"Nearer still, lady,—at Rotterdam."

"So much the worse,—I shall not go there!" exclaimed Gabrielle, half serious, and more in fun. "And you have just left her, and dare to flirt with me, sir!"

"Mademoiselle, you are like an elder sister,—and I hope you are not free."

"What, sir! am I so old? To whom do you devote me?"

"To my best friend, lady, and the best friend of everybody so happy as to know him. Am I in error?—pardon me, he worships you."

"As I question freely, I must stand to be questioned. Your friend is so noble and good that I am afraid of him. I am a butterfly—he dwells among the stars. My obstacle is his excellence."

"And my difficulty at Rotterdam is that the lady abhors the rough profession of arms. Perhaps when you see her you might condescend to try to enlighten her."

"And perhaps, sir, you will try to induce your friend to stoop a little from the zenith of perfection to us children of fashion."

"But then, lady, I should less esteem my friend,—his nobleness is so human: he is a true follower of Christ."

"There it is—that's what frightens me!—that touch of fanatic madness which appeals to the mystic and unreal everywhere. You have caught it too."

"Oh, lady, what mean you? Have you no religion?"

"No, sir, I fear not—in that sense. It spoils a soldier."

"Nay, lady, I shall fight the better, and suffer or die the better. I am a Red Cross Knight."

"The Crusaders were fools, who should have staid at home and looked after their castles and wives," said she.

Then, suddenly changing her tone, she pointed round: "Are you aware that this was Count Philip's home in childhood,—those the pictures of his ancestors, and this his mother's room?"

"I had partly guessed it. How grand of him and his sister to bear the loss so serenely! Forgive me for saying I wish he had it—so you were not the worse."

"So do I; but it is not now in my power, but my uncle's. Else it should be his."

"But, lady, he would never care for it but with the heart of the lovely restorer."

"I protest you know how to storm a fortress already. I must retire, for I feel my defenses weakening."

"That is just the moment when a real soldier would not allow retreat; but, alas! I am not the right person to enforce a capitulation."

"Nor am I quite in that mood," she said laughing; "so *vaarwel* for a time."

The time at Brussels passed in a constant round of social amusement. The Court parties, the rides in the pleasant environs, the introductions and calls on fashionable people, severely taxed the Fleming's patience; but it was new to George.

Before they parted one evening, George said to the Fleming, "Forgive me if I wound you;—these were the scenes of your childhood. How patient you are, who might be lord of all here!"

"Yes, George, I have had to school my heart severely, and nothing but an anchor above could have quieted my ambition; but I confess I hardly wish it otherwise."

"My friend and teacher, would it not be well if you had a little more desire for these things—at least in sympathy with lesser mortals?"

"George, I know what you mean. In the effort to master passions dangerous to my peace, I have put a strain on myself which makes me misunderstood. I have so long averted my eyes from certain objects, that I fear to glance at them lest I should idolize them again."

"But might you not save other idolaters by a little sympathy? Still I marvel at and admire your self-control."

"My friend, I shall think of your words when Gabrielle is with me. I see she likes you rarely."

"Because I am your honored friend. Now counsel me about my future."

"You will find the Duke, to whom you have commendations, very like his friend and pattern, Gustavus Adolphus. Perhaps he is not so openly religious, but he and his officers, in the main, are right loyal, thorough soldiers. With the Duke, never hesitate to speak your opinion, though it contradict what he has just said. He values nothing more than frank speech, when it has some sense to back it. If there are French generals there, go on the other tack: offend not their *amour propre*,—that is the Achilles' heel of Frenchmen."

So George pursued his way, his troop being now well armed, as well as himself, by the Countess's liberality, who gave them also a flag with the inscription "Face the Foe." On reaching the Swedish outposts, their martial appearance obtained a cordial welcome as they rode to head-quarters.

Arrived at the tent of the Duke, they dismounted, and George delivered his letters. An audience was fixed in a few hours, and meantime quarters were assigned, and George was invited to the officers' mess, where, as an Englishman with men under arms, he attracted considerable notice. He found a few English already there, with similar views to his own. The Duke received him with polite thanks. "Have you the scent of the eagle or the vulture, Sir Englishman? for you come just as battle impends;—all the more welcome. Your London and Flemish letters are most satisfactory. I can offer you a cavalry command at once. The hostile army of relief is at hand, and Savelli and John de Vert will give us trouble, so that probably you will see hard fighting in a day or two."

George expressed his readiness, only wishing "the rest of his men, about a hundred in number, whom he expected, had arrived already."

"They have seen no service yet?"

"No, your Excellency."

"Fresh troops must not be relied on at once. They shall be put in the reserve for the present."

"Forgive me, Duke,—I will answer for them," said George, remembering the Fleming's counsels. "English life is, at present, a daily strife, and they have often fought along with our train-band."

"Ah, you will have bloody work at home! You know one Cromwell?"

"Intimately, Duke; he sent me here."

"Yes, he is sending us a host of scholars for the struggle he foresees. Who is he?"

"A plain member of our Parliament, and a Christian patriot, your Grace; but a man who sees far ahead of most."

"So I think, from what I hear. Do not be open on English affairs, young man; it is not safe. Spies and assassins abound, whom I would hang on the next tree if I could catch them. My adjutant, Von Raumer, shall give you further instructions. Come to our war-council, which is to-morrow. Speak out plainly there, if you have anything to say. Farewell."

So George found himself on very pleasant terms in his new service; but when alone, going to rest, with nerves strained by the perils he had already encountered, he thought of his first approach to that stirring field where a man takes his life in his hand, and may all at once be stretched there a lifeless corpse. He thought of England, home, and duty; but also of Alice, and the visions of future advancement and prosperity; and then lifted his heart above all, saying, "My times are in Thy hands, O God of mercy!"

CHAPTER XXV.

THE ENGLISH SISTER.

"Donnez, riches, l'aumone est sœur de la prière,
Helas! quand un viellard sur votre seuil de pierre,
Tout roidi par hiver, en vain tombe à genoux,
Quand les petits enfants, les mains de froid rougies
Ramassent sous vos pieds les miettes des orgies,
La face du Seigneur se détourne de vous."

VICTOR HUGO.

BEFORE the first Sabbath after the fresh arrivals at Rotterdam, Bridge's house was thronged with his old parishioners to inquire how the holy day was to be spent.

"There is no Church of England here," said the Rector.

"Surely we can form one," replied Dame Norris; "none of us have left our Prayer Books behind."

Bridge then gave the history of his own first Sunday; and added, "I have promised to preach to-morrow, and hope you will also join the service of this simple exile Church." Harriet and Jane Allen, with Charlotte Ridgeley, were in favor of preserving the cherished forms of the old English Church; while John Allen said, "'How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?' I would rather have something new and fresh here. To use the old service would be melancholy, and would remind us always of our banishment."

"Oh, we must have our sacred collects and sweet psalms," cried Grace Friend. "I should almost die of grief if we worshiped differently."

"I was warned," exclaimed good Hannah Vores, "that we should find in Holland no Prayer Books or surplices; and yet, new countries, new fashions. I came with mind and eyes open. Dear Rector, you seem to have been led on in advance—almost out of sight, I may say. But we love and trust you, and we shall open our ears to all you have to teach us; only we can't make you our priest—private judgment, you know. Yet forgive us, but we must 'judge what you say' as 'wise men,' though no doubt some of us are only 'weaker vessels.' Love will make us all agree." This speech touched all hearts, and drew all nearer in esteem to this large-hearted lady.

"Dear Hannah Vores and friends, I must not expect you to realize at once the consequences, which I have gradually arrived at. To me the Bible seems a new, fresh book; and the Church, as organized by it, a new institution. We will study it together as time allows; but to morrow I pray you come and worship with me, and with the Christians who have been so good to me."

"Indeed we will," was the general reply; but some few declared they could not become Separatists, Brownists, or the like.

Then Mr. Allen proposed that in the morning they should for once follow their pastor's example, and in the afternoon meet at his house for a service according to the forms of the English Church. By degrees nearly all came into this compromise, which Bridge called "one of Solomon's judgments." On the morrow, therefore, the Haringvleet sanctuary was unusually full. Allen was at once received to the elders' seat. Hugh Peters was unusually warm, racy, and tender in his prayer and Bible comments. All were melted to tears by the pathos and familiar tones of Bridge's sermon. The prayer of Allen seemed to bind all up together in a generous union of heart "as strangers in a strange land."

In the afternoon the newer comers met by themseves, with the historic associations grouped about the Prayer Book, and the sermons of their own beloved Rector. Yet somehow they missed the kind strangers who had been with them in the morning, and they lacked something of the breadth and liberty of the morning worship.

Bridge lost no time in calling them together frequently for Scripture inquiry and prayer on questions they had previously taken for granted. To these conferences Hugh Peters was soon invited, on account of his longer and maturer experience. By these careful discussions the people were convinced that the things which were being revived by Laud really had their roots in their own Prayer Book. They discovered with surprise that their Church was but partially reformed. They began to see that baptized parishes were not New Testament Churches. They saw that the early Churches received their members and excluded them by the free vote of the members, and that they selected their own officers, bishops, or deacons, in the same way. They found no warrant in the New Testament for bishops ruling over pastors of whole districts,—much less Archbishops, Patriarchs, or Popes ruling over the clergy of races and nations. No authority seemed to be allowed by Holy Scripture to civil magistrates for interference with their subjects' freedom of conscience, or with worship in the Church. In these and other respects the exiles began to be more Puritan than the Puritans, and to see the faults of their Mother-Church with growing clearness. If ever they returned, they would have to purge the English Church thoroughly, till it purely reflected New Testament order. By degrees they began to worship twice on Sunday, and once in the week, in the church of the Haringvleet. Hugh Peters presently went away to America, afterwards to return to England, for that career of notoriety and of suffering which history records. Bridge and Allan were regularly chosen as elder and teacher of the Congregational Church in Rotterdam, which prospered and grew strong by frequent accessions from England, and by large benevolence and liberal Christian works which honored their profession.

Hannah Vores and Grace Friend were soon at their old work—having independent wealth of their own—of feeding, clothing, and helping the needy of the congregation, and gathering in the young for instruction. For these efforts the ladies formed a benevolent society for visiting and relieving all who needed it among the English refugees. Alice, the Ridgeleys, the Allens, and others, joined heartily in these good works. But by degrees Alice gained facility in Dutch conversation, and yearning for wider exertions, discovered homes and districts of Rotterdam full of neglected misery. Though the Dutch were humane, and had many valuable charities, there was a lack of help for the forlorn and outcast. Alice had the courage to venture among the homes of the sailors and the dock people. She sought out the sick, the orphan, and widow. She talked kindly to them, and listened to their sorrows. Having a lovely voice, she and her young helpers sang hymns in the chambers of affliction. The people would hush, and hearken, and wipe their eyes, and beg them to come again.

One day three starving orphans came before Alice, without parent or friend. These unhappy creatures, wandering about to beg, and becoming bold and vicious, Alice could not leave: she was at the moment near the great mansion on the Boompjees, where the magistrate Herr Koop lived who had treated them so politely. A sudden thought came to her, and she led into that great portal her wretched charge. The magistrate saw her coming, and drew near. "Wat wenscht ge? Ah! these little vagrants have stolen, or—— What charge have you against them?"

"None, vaarde heer, but of misery. What can be done for them?"

"Oh, I will send them to the House of Correction,—or——"

"Is there no kind of home for such, sir?" said Alice, sadly; "they will perish, or worse."

"I don't know. My *domine* would help them from the Church fund."

"But, sir, they want a shelter and home. I must find one, or create one: I cannot desert them."

"Vaarde vriendin," said his worship, fairly conquered, "you shall have one. See, I have a large storehouse yonder which has not been used for some time: now you and I will fit it up; but it must be a secret, or all the young vagabonds will come flocking to it. Think

what it means before you begin. You will soon have no small affair on your hands. I will help you! Gaarne! op mijn woord van eerlijk man."

"Dear sir, I accept your offer as if from God. I know the very woman to take charge of the place." So she sent one of her friends for her faithful Ann and Fanny. The good Herr Koop took the key and opened the house, which was as foul as the chamber in Bunyan's Interpreter's House. But the ladies got a broom and drove the merchant away by raising the dust. Ann arrived, and lighted a fire, which looked like charity itself, warming the neglected house and children. They, poor little things, were soon fed and washed, and playing about as if nothing but joy had ever been their lot. Fanny had never seemed so lively and happy since her troubles as when she romped about with these children, caressing them with a loving grace which Ann was unable to attain. There were several rooms in the house, and Alice soon had a bedridden old man in one, and sick and helpless women in another. The Dutchman paid all the bills for some time, till one day when he found Alice conferring with Ann on some new cases. "My fair sister, or nun," said he, smiling, "when will you be content?"

"Are you tired of helping, dear sir?" she said, sorrowfully. "There are so many more—there should be another house for the sick. We have twenty orphans now—just look at them." She opened a door, and showed the girls sewing quietly, and the boys listening to Ann reading. They all rose, and looked so bright and happy.

"*Liebchen*," said Herr Koop, using the unrivaled German word of endearment, "I will see my neighbor Hoboken to-morrow, and bring him here. He must build the other house, and help us to keep it."

From this beginning, Alice and her friends went on quietly—finding more need, and enlarging the circle of wealthy helpers, till, without knowing it, she became widely known and loved among the Dutch as the *Engelsche zuster* (English sister). Whenever she went among the poorest of the poor, all doors opened, and the deepest respect awaited her. As is common in all these efforts, Alice had her rebuffs and her disappointments: those she had most labored for often proved ungrateful. Her mother was sorry to see how weary she seemed at home, and what a burden she seemed to carry.

"My child," she would say, "this charge is growing too much for you,—I cannot see you so heavy-laden with anxiety. Remember, there is one at the wars who will expect a good account of you presently."

"Ah, mother, I trust we may have a good report of him. I must have something to keep off those thoughts." Her mother was silenced thus.

One day as she was engaged in the orphan school, several gentlemen appeared near the door. As she ended, her old friend the merchant Herr Koop advanced.

"*Liebchen*, don't be alarmed,—this is our *Burgemeester*." A noble-looking man offered her the thanks of the city for her valuable works among the poor. "And these are a deputation from our Raad and Council, come to inspect for themselves, and to offer you *veel complimenten*."

With perfect simplicity Alice showed them the whole arrangement, begging their pardon for her interference, and their kind aid in furtherance of whatever they approved. The Burgemeester promised the readiest co-operation, hoping to form similar institutions in other parts of the town.

Alice was somewhat confused by this high honor, and even more so when her old friend said, "*Liebchen*, would you sing my favorite hymn to the children and to us?"

She soon recovered her composure, and, turning to her children, she lifted her silvery voice in the sacred psalm, calling on all to join her in the simple chorus,

"Love God—for God is love."

Alice had found her mission.

During the delay which took place before leaving Brussels, Hannchen sounded her brother's feelings respecting it, and she by no means wholly left Gabrielle alone. It was not often, however, that she could be found in a mood suited to more serious converse, but on one such occasion Hannchen frankly inquired, "Dearest Gabrielle, what are you going to Rotterdam for? The journey is long, and not without peril, and the aim of it is not apparent."

"What if I like to pleasure your good brother when I can, Hannchen?" was the prompt reply.

"But you know you are raising his hopes afresh."

"I hope there is no harm in my sympathy with these English exiles. As his sister, I ought to go, and you too."

"We are sisters in a different sense, after all. When will you end this suspense?"

"Dearest Hannchen, you provoke me to be savage, but I will be meek as a dove. Matters must remain as they are if we are to remain friends at all."

"This platonic love, Gabrielle, is perilous and unsatisfying. In going to Rotterdam, you place yourself more in his hands; and it is not in human nature, and certainly not in true love like his, to be without fresh expectations."

"I cannot help it, Hannchen; but I own to you, I do look to this journey with some hope. There may come a solution—I know not how; but I am inexplicably drawn on, as it seems to me, by a good and pure influence, which whispers to me, 'At Rotterdam you shall find peace, and the guidance you have long asked for.' I really think, Hannchen, it is a drawing not of earth. Bear with me, sister, for I am anxious, and not so happy as I seem."

Here gentle tears fell from her eyes, and they kissed tenderly; and Hannchen softly said, "I believe it is a drawing from Heaven, my sister; and I trust that all will be well. But," she added, "why are you in no haste to start if you have such hopes to be fulfilled?"

"Hannchen, I am a strange compound. One day I am all eagerness to set forth; then comes fears and hesitations. I am drawn and repelled: I would, and cannot. There has been a great conflict, but I hope it draws toward an end."

A short time after this conversation the day for departure was fixed. The young Countess had numerous attendants. She traveled partly in a sort of sedan-chair drawn by mules, and sometimes on horseback. The Fleming took the lead of the party, and with him was a young Hollander of rank, attached to the Embassy, named Baron Van Ruyter, who was devoted to the Fleming, and little less so to his sister. He came privately to Van Diense, as they started, and said, "All right—ford of Gorcum, *schlecte tijdingen*."

Their journey prospered at the outset. At Antwerp, they rested under the shadow of the splendid spire; at Breda, too, a short stay was made. Various travelers from time to time joined their train for protection, and afforded no small variety by their peculiarities and news. Jews from the German fairs, merchants, fishermen, strolling musicians, parties of friars, farmers or artisans,—each showed their humors, or had their story to tell. After leaving Breda, a tall, elderly man joined them, leading a pony on which was seated a maiden with a gayly decorated guitar in her hand, a gilt crown on her curling hair, a dress of silk and spangles fit for a theater, and a small mask over her nose and forehead, suffering bright eyes to gleam out. Lady Gabrielle begged for a specimen of her art. The old man took the instrument, carefully tuned it, and struck the prelude to the old German love song,

"Annchen von Tharau ist mir gefällt,
Sie ist mein Leben, mein Gut, und mein Geld.
Annchen von Tharau hat wieder ihr Herz
Auf mich gerichtet in Lieb' und in Schwerz."

Baron Van Ruyter gazed on the Fleming's sister as the singer grew in passion and power of voice, till at the lines

"Ich wollt dir folgen durch Walder, durch Meer,
Durch Eis, durch Eisen, durch feindliches, Meer,"

their eyes met with a flash of revelation. The old man touched his instrument defily, in a listening attitude, to his daughter's sweet trills,—now smiling and now grave. She then played, while her father, in a fine tenor voice, sang,—

"Es geht ein Bergemann in Reich herum,"—

a song against the Pope Hildebrand and his cruelty to the German Emperor. Ever and anon she managed to put her father out, or fling her scarf over his head, or do some merry trick, which provoked his assumed passion. Then she, in turn, gazing on Gabrielle, sang the touching mocking ode—

"Was ist lieben? Sich betruben
Sich stels widmen kranker Pein
Oh wie weise! Der so leise
Gehet, und mag sicher sein,"

which seemed to throw our maiden into a dreamy state, so that she noted the singer no more, and they proceeded on their way.

The Fleming came up to ask some trivial question, when Gabrielle suddenly said, "Philip, I know not how it is, but I have a presentiment over me. I almost wish I had not started, and yet I would not turn back."

"Turn not back, my sister, from the great kindness you are doing me, or I may say—

'Amor, Spotter—Aller Gotter
Amor, aller schalkeit voll.'"

"Philip, you ought to scold and hate me! I am your water-sprite—your demon! Why are you so patient that I cannot break with you? But are we in any peril here?"

"Gabrielle, you know we have enemies, and who can tell their plans? Your family have not given you up, and this movement towards Holland stirs fresh rage."

"I know my uncle threatened me not to leave Brussels. They would carry me to Paris by force, he said, and there would shut me up, or marry me to some Romanist."

"I may tell you I believe we are secure against surprise in this journey, though some assault may occur."

"I fear it not, but almost wish it came, to end the suspense of my life. Philip, I am growing weary of riches and magnificence;—they breed care and animosity. I could wish myself a simple *Deutches madchen*, with her dairy, or her goats to keep on the mountain. I believe they may contrive to annul my present claims by false law, and to strip me of my trappings. By Heaven, I wish they would! I could breathe then freely."

"Nay, sister, be not hasty. Do you know a natural son of your father's elder brother whom your mother has adopted, and is putting forth as the true heir?"

"Yes, I saw him in Paris, poor fellow; and took him from poverty, and put him to school. Surely Albert loves me."

"It is a great temptation. I hear they have found witnesses, and prepared a case."

"Be it so;—I care not if they succeed."

Here they came in sight of the broad river which they must cross at the ferry named Gorcum on the other side, or Workcum on this. The water was smooth, and glistening in the bright sun as they came in view of it; but as they stood gazing, a keen whistling breeze arose, and whipped the glassy surface into foamy waves; the sky clouded over with gray mist; the further bank was almost shrouded. The Countess shivered at the change, and at the recollection that here the chief danger was apprehended. Arriving at the bank, the travelers were divided into three parties. The Countess and her ladies were to go over in the second trip. Already the first party were on the water, when a large troop of men at arms, with a knight as their leader, rode up and summoned them to surrender. The Countess was in the hostelry resting, and hearing the maiden talk and sing. Her troopers were dismounted, but at the Fleming's word they were soon in array, ready to fight. The knight drew near, and declared to the Fleming that he was the uncle of Gabrielle, and objected to her present journey, and came to escort her back to Brussels.

"Count," he replied, "we are her servants. Enter and speak with her, but put no force on her will."

The uncle now entered the inn to seek his niece, and peacefully settle the matter, if possible. As he heard the strains of music, he entered, saying, "Well done, my pleasure-loving niece!—music even on the road, and very good music too! Now you must turn back;—Brussels is the place for you. You will die of *ennui* among these Dutch psalm-singers."

"Uncle, I return not. I have had enough of restraint and mystery. I pant for freindship and open air."

"Silly girl!—you will repent when you have lost your inheritance and estates. Albert, come hither."

A young man in armor appeared, as if reluctantly, and knelt at her feet, saying, "Lady Gabrielle, I am Albert, whom you befriended,"

The uncle then roughly declared Albert to be the rightful son of his elder brother, and therefore heir to the property. "But, niece, return with us, and this claim shall be compromised. Albert is generous."

The youth tried to kiss her hand, but the irritated lady refused, saying, "Generous, indeed! I have helped and trained my supplanter. What begins in treason might well end in prison or death to me. No, I take all risks, and refuse to return."

"Then your defenders must look to themselves," said the uncle, clapping his hand to his sword.

Now entered the Fleming to say that the second party were waiting for their lady to cross.

"They shall wait long!" answered the uncle, snatching Gabrielle's hand.

The Fleming came between, and said, "Let us contend outside, and not in a lady's presence."

They strode out together, and conferred further, while the second boat was being sent over empty, at the Fleming's order, to fetch back the rest of his men.

"Now, Count," said the Fleming, "be reasonable. We are well able to keep you at bay till the rest return, and then we are nearly equal. Very soon we may have Dutch aid, as Baron Van Ruyter, the Dutch Attaché, has taken his measures."

"Give me up my niece!" he exclaimed in vehement passion. "I will have her!"

Just then the old man and his singing maiden on the pony hurried from the inn, lustily shouting and screaming for the empty ferry-boat to stop and take them over. There was some doubt, but at last they reached the bank, and were taken on board at Van Ruyter's entreaty, the old man saying, "We must be at Dort to-night, to sing at the Burgemeester's dinner." This little incident created a pause, during which the Count's voice was heard giving the command to his men to form and charge. They were advancing with drawn swords, while the Fleming's band sat firm—few as they were—to resist their advance. The Count's sword had crossed Van Diense's . . . . when a shrill cry came from the boat, now half across. The singing girl, alarmed at the fray, had fallen on her knees, on the deck of the boat,—her mask dropped off, and her crown; and with outstretched hands she cried, "Uncle—Van Diense—hold! I am Gabrielle! Stay, stay your hand! Shed no blood for me."

A sudden pause took place. The scene was almost ludicrous in its transformation. The leaders dismounted; the Count entered the inn, and there found, in his niece's dress, surrounded by her ladies, the poor singing girl, half dead with fear.

"Minion!" cried the enraged uncle, "beware how you mix yourself with serious matters! You shall to prison."

"Nay," said Van Ruyter, "she is a Dutch subject, under my protection. Our troops are not far off."

"Send for my niece back, for I have business with her."

"We could not force her," calmly replied the Fleming; and added, "Sir Count, for the present your plot has exploded very harmlessly. You do not want to carry us away, or these ladies. Your real victim is beyond your power, and I hope will always be beyond the power of cruel wiles and selfish conspiracies. Will you cross the river? The rest will be on to Dort ere you overtake them, and even Gorcum has some Dutch fellows who will fight for a lady's freedom. *Veel geluk!*"

The sullen Count strode away without any answer, but made straight for his horse, and was soon heard harshly crying, "En route, en avant à Bruxelles!" The Fleming thankfully followed Gabrielle.

CHAPTER XXVI.

CAPTAIN GEORGE'S FIRST BATTLE.

"Ach Gott! Thu erheben
Mein jung Hertzensblut
In frischem freudigem Lebea
In freien frommen Muth
Lass Kraft mich erweben
In Hertz und in Hand.
In leben und zu-sterben
Fürs heilige Vaterland."

MASSMANN.

GEORGE was soon called to lead his young soldiers into real battle. The vast castle of Rheinfeld stood on an eminence overlooking the great river Rhine, not far from the city of Basle. This fortress, together with that of Breissac, and the city of Freyburg, is the key of Brisgau, and was besieged by the Swedes and French. A powerful army was sent by the Emperor Ferdinand III. to relieve the siege. George was one morning taking a round of the siege works, to see after the sentinels, when he saw a party of prisoners—a very young officer and his men—brought in from the outposts. On inquiring, he found they were French, and had only just arrived to join their regiment, but through some mistake had been guided right into their opponents' lines. George accosted the officer, who spoke a little English, and invited him to take refreshments in his tent, till his release was arranged. The offer was thankfully accepted, and George was interested in the pleasant manner of this almost boy-soldier, with his fair hair and blue eyes, and his frank address. In the course of a lively conversation, George spoke of Norwich, and the youth asked if he knew Philip Van Diense. This led to the discovery that he was related to the Lady Gabrielle, and was Count Albert, her former *protégé*. George spoke very warmly of both Gabrielle and the Fleming. The youth listened with a sort of melancholy, and said, "No one has more cause to love the Lady Gabrielle than I, who owe to her my very education. But the family, and the priests who advise them, will never hear of her union with Van Diense, a heretic and a trader."

"Just like those meddling priests!" replied George. "But you, my friend, have influence; and you will stand by your benefactor?"

"But," replied Albert, "this man is a Dutch peddler, a low adventurer, a man of no religion or gentility."

"Do you know him, sir?"

"No; but I am told so."

"Then," said George, "I have known him for years. He is my best friend. He is a finished gentleman, and of high birth and fortune, although of the latter he has been unjustly deprived. He holds a high place among European merchants, and has access to courts and statesmen. His piety adorns his whole life. You have been cruelly misinformed."

"Indeed I have, if what you say is true. I am an unhappy man, and have been thrust into a false position."

"Doubt not. Inquire at the French Embassy."

"I will do whatever I can to be right," cried the youth, as he bade farewell, in order to pass to the other camp.

The defense of the Rheinfeld was very obstinate, and the Imperial forces arrived before it fell. So soon as they appeared, George, who had already joined in the repulse of one or two sallies of the besieged garrison, was summoned to a council of war.

The Duke described the situation of the armies, and the order of battle was then freely discussed. It was usual then to place cavalry on the extreme of either wing, and this disposition was about to be made, when George simply said that he had heard an English officer remark that "cavalry thus placed were winded in the first charge, and were apt to push success too far. It was better to hold a strong body of horse in reserve, to charge where the general attack failed."

There was a pause, and no one seemed to notice the remark till the Duke said, "Comrade, I warrant your friend was that Cromwell I have heard so much about But it is good sense, and we will try it."

"Your Grace, I fear I was rash in saying anything in such a company."

"Not so. Let all speak freely. 'Wisdom often runs on modest wheels.'"

In this new cavalry reserve, George and his troop (already increased to nearly a hundred) were placed; while rough old General Wrengel testily said, "Best place for unseasoned troops. Clever young fellow to put us between him and the foe! We shall want no help from the reserve." The council of officers then broke up to take their posts. General Wrengel commanded the left wing, Clausen the right, and the Duke the whole. By this time the dark ranks of the foe were to be seen ranged in line, with John de Wert's banner on the left, and Savelli's on their right. They stood on the slope of some gentle hills crowned with trees. Broken ground and ditches intervened between Wrengel and Savelli. Behind the Swedes were the lofty towers of the fortress, crowded with soldiers and citizens, hoping for rescue, and ready to rush forth on any occasion.

Now George first heard the roar of cannon, and witnessed the plunge of the shot, and the havoc caused in the lines of men. Several balls fell near him, and one struck the horse of a trooper, frightfully rending the horse, and obliging the rider to seek another. To stand and behold such scenes is hard, even for veterans; and I will not deny that George found his heart throbbing, and sometimes almost paralyzed. But now the trumpets sounded the charge, and, in good order, the first line advanced. Many dropped as they drew near to the enemy's ranks: shrieks and groans were heard from wounded men and horses, mingled with desperate cries of fighting men eager for the encounter. The course of Clausen and his right wing was overwhelming, and Wert's lines were driven back in disorder. But Wrengel had obstacles to overcome—ditches and hedges to cross; so the left wing hung behind the other; and being fallen on by the foe, wavered and fell back. Stout old Wrengel himself, fighting like a lion, and swearing like a fiend, was severed from his retiring regiments, and all but captured. The Duke now gave the order to the reserve to charge, and rally the disordered left. On they spurred, and their advance brought George close to where Wrengel was dragged off his horse, and surrounded. George helped with those around him to scatter the oppressors, and reseat the General. He then rode on, hearing the harsh voice of the General exclaim, "Potz tausend taufeln! 's ist der Englischer Hauptmann."

After a stubborn fight, the disordered troops rallied, and pressed on again, beating back Savelli; so that when night threw its shadow over the scene, victory was inclining to the Swedes.

From the time of the first entering into action, George forgot himself, and encountered lance, sword, or pistol, horse or foot, with the same fearless and untiring ardor. He hardly received a scratch, and but few of his troopers fell; and these he had arranged to have borne to the rear at once. He was still full of ardor, when the enemy withdrew under cover of darkness, and his first battle was over. Assembling his young soldiers at the close of the battle, still warm for action, he spoke a few words of praise to them. "Well done, my young Norwich comrades!—the old city will be proud of you; they will toast you on the Tombland Green, as the victors of Rheinfeld. Your charge rescued Wrengel's wing from destruction, and saved the General himself. Well done! You have done well the first time,—God has watched over us. Go on. One day you may save England!" A loud "Hurrah!" rent the air. "Hurrah for our brave Captain Sherwood! Hurrah! Hurrah for old England!"

Then turning aside, George sought out his faithful Will, who had fought like a lion by his side, often defending him rather than himself. "All right, Will?" said he. "Not a scratch."

"No, sir, God be praised. But 'tis terrible work. All I have ever heard of war is nothing to what I have seen and felt this day."

"Why, Will, I thought you took it very coolly. You seemed as easy as when I have seen you dancing with Ann."

"Ah, sir, when I saw that poor fellow at the outset, blown off his horse by a ball, I felt as if I could scarcely help turning my horse and galloping away. As we began to move, my blood stirred, but one after another dropped on their backs, gashed and bleeding. In a moment it might be my turn. Then we came face to face with a line of men looking like devils, with a murderous fire in their eyes, and their swords all ready to cut at me. I had enough to do to gather myself up. At last I saw one of these fellows looking at me, and making towards me; by instinct I parried, and returned his blow. He was out of my way. I did not look after him, for another and another came and went. I forgot all about myself, and lost all fear of shot or steel. I hewed away, right and left, till no more were left in front. The retreat sounded, and it was over before I wished."

Old Wrengel asked our English Captain to sup with him, and grimly said, "I owe you my supper, for I might have been feasting the vultures and dogs to-night." At the table there was rough and hot talk of the day's doings, and a good deal of drinking. The Swedish officers made out that the day's success was actually owing to their troops on the left; who, after a check, they declared came on with double force. George did not dispute their self-flattering idea, but moved to go away as soon as possible. On his retiring, a little stir was created, all protesting against his leaving so soon, and by deferred praises making up for the previous want of attention. "Sir Captain," said Wrengel, "I must thank you, before all here, for your brave charge in defense of our wing. The cursed

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hedges and ditches had stopped our men in their onset."

Here a French officer, a guest of the General's, and no tunder his orders, broke in merrily with, "In their downset, rather, General;—we were driven back by Wert's troops."

Old Wrengel looked fiercely at the interrupter, and continued, "I say onset, Monsieur! We were rallying——"

"Drowning, more likely!" cried the uncompromising Frenchman.

"This excellent English Captain," went on Wrengel, "brought up his men, and helped us out of the muddy pools."

At this the French critic said aloud, "Leaped over us, you mean! and drove back the advancing foe in our place."

Here Wrengel paused a moment, as if his inventive powers were paralyzed, and then answered, "Monsieur, and my good friend, you are pleased to be witty at our expense; but as you were among the drowned, what is the worth of your observations? Why! you were *hors de combat.*"

"Not so much as you, General, whom I saw floundering, without a horse, in the mire, till that gentleman and his troop remounted you."

"Well," cried Wrengel, "is not that just what I was thanking him for?—when you strike in with your imper——, that is, unnecessary remarks. I say the English Captain charged bravely, and supported our advance."

"And I have the honor to add," said the Frenchman, with unruffled good humor, "that he took the advance out of your hands, and left you in the mud."

"Really, Monsieur, and my friend, you provoke me," said the angry General, finding his way always barred effectually by his critic. "Do you imply that I am speaking lies? Potz tausend teufeln! Do you want to walk out with me in grim earnest? If so, I'm your man."

"No, old friend; we have tried each other's mettle that way, when we were young. But you know my old fault,—I must say as I see. I was on my horse, and able to follow my young friend yonder in his noble charge, which won the day. Now, Wrengel, do yourself justice for a fine fel ow as you are at the bottom, and adopt my view of the case.'"

Then Wrengel, with an effort, gave his hand to his old friend, and said, "There are always two sides to a matter. You saw what you say, and you and the Englishman acted gallantly. But we, too, crept out of our ditch as soon as we could, and were not far behind you." This George confirmed readily, while he thanked the Frenchman for his splendid help in the battle, and in this brief encounter. George having received most honorable salutations, came back to his tent, where, under the stars, and in view of the watch-fires of the foe, he thought of Alice; and hardly wondered, as he looked at his torn and stained clothes, that a woman should dislike a soldier's work. He thought of Edward studying in peace, and of his parents grieving over England, and of the Fleming and Gabrielle on the way to Rotterdam, and of Cromwell nursing the patriot's fire.

Just then a soldier entered and introduced an Englishman—Captain Crawley, just arrived. A large-made man, in a Spanish cloak, came in, saying in a deep voice, "Captain Sherwood, the Lord be with you!" Yes, it was Cromwell himself, who added, "I could not stay behind. The hour of judgment had not struck. I had thought of going to America, but I resolved to come here, like the rest of you, and see some real work. Godly men, these Swedes; and I hear they did well to-day. Now I would not be known, save to the Duke, who keeps my secret. We will mess and fight together; and go and see what old Bannier is doing in Bohemia, and back again in time for all the hard knocks. And one day we will ask grace to strike hard for England and the Gospel." There was something vigorous and inspiring in the tones and looks of this man, who seemed fit to be England's champion.

Cromwell (or Crawley, as he desired to be called,) had brought out a company of Huntingdon lads, well armed and drilled. Now George felt as if all would go well with such a companion. They opened the Bible together, and Cromwell prayed. Then they slept, and early next morning paraded, and took their posts; only this time they were not in reserve, but on Wrengel's flank. It was good to see Cromwell keenly surveying the field, and guessing the cause of various movements. He saw at once that the enemy's right had lost so many men that the Swedes outflanked them, and suggested that their horse should draw back out of sight, so as not to show their superiority till they were nearer, when they could spread out and flank them. Then he used words memorable since on other occasions, "The Lord has given them into our hands!" When they moved forward, it was grand to see him and his men compact together, sitting as if part of their horses,—cool and wary, yet ever pushing on. It was such a sight as gave even foreigners pleasure. Then, on their approaching the enemy, attention was riveted on the sharp loud command, the fan-like expansion, the sudden wheel and dash upon the exposed wing, the riding down horse and foot; and on Cromwell in front, with George at his side, smiting down and cheering on, threatening and pursuing the flying. The rest of the army, full of victorious confidence, pushed on, and soon the Imperialists were in full rout, and both of their generals, with many officers, were taken prisoners. When the troops halted, and victory was proclaimed, it was fine to hear the Swedes break out into Gustavus Adolphus's hymn,

"Verzage nicht du Hauflein klein."

Nature herself appeared to sympathize with the exultation of human feelings, for upon a dark cloud, heightened by the dust and smoke of recent combat, gleamed forth soft and glorious the broad, sweeping, arched belt of the variegated bow,—God's ensign of peace and promise to the earth.

When that psalm was over, the English mustered, and Cromwell spoke some words of serious piety, to which deep "Amens" responded; and then they sung in English the Hundredth Psalm. Evidently a new era in war was come, when victory should crown, not licentious freebooters, but well-principled Christians, warring for their faith.

The Duke came up just then, and, saluting them, said, "Messieurs English, you have done nobly on a glorious day. Captain Crawley, I think we have given you a good taste of the game. Your outflanking was a master-stroke."

"Your Grace, we English of late have had tame sovereigns—as Jamie the Solomon,—and are hardly known on the Continent save for a taunt. But, please God, we will learn from your gallant Swedes to strike for ourselves presently."

"I shall take care not to side with your enemies!" said the Duke, laughing, as he rode off.

"George," said Cromwell, "we shall surely one day stand together on such a scene in England. There shall be Wentworth the renegade, and his crafty master; and, alas! some wrong-headed English Royalists, whose blood I should like to spare. And on our side there shall be Essex, and Kimbolton, and Fairfax, with some rightdown English yeomen and burghers, under godly discipline; and we will sing that hymn, and ride to death or victory. O God of Israel," said he, suddenly lifting his brown face and large eyes heavenward, "Thou wilt give Thy saints the victory. Remember, George," he added, bringing down his steadfast eyes on the youth, "what I have said this day, and do Thou, too, O God, remember!"

CHAPTER XXVII.

GABRIELLE IN ROTTERDAM.

"Liebe dank ich deiner Stärke
Ja ich hab mich losgerissen
Ich entfloh den Finsternissen
Num wohlauf zum heitern Werke
Statt dein eignen Gram zu nähren
Einsam störrig trauernd mussig
Deines Lebens uberdrussig
Sollen Thaten dich bewahren."

GIVERS.

THE gay cavalcade of the Lady Gabrielle pursued its way through Dort to the pretty Iselmonde, a gem of a village looking over the broad lake-like spread of the ample river Maas. Here they had the delight of finding an ornamented barge waiting to convey the ladies the rest of the way. In it were the Rector and his wife, with Alice. Warm were the greetings and pleasant the introductions. The Lady Gabrielle and Alice seemed mutually drawn together at once. The Fleming and Bridge were delighted to meet again, and Van Ruyter was soon made one of the circle. It was very pleasant to recline on the soft cushions, to gaze over the sunlit expanse of water, with its banks crested with pretty cottages and spires, to glide on without effort, and to look on faces so often imagined, and gain an actual impression of characters so mutually interesting. Rotterdam, thus approached, looked to these contented friends like a second Venice. On landing, they accompanied the Countess to a spacious residence provided for her, and there left her for awhile.

The Lady Gabrielle took a lively interest in the labors of Alice among the poor, and showed tact and real benevolence in this unaccustomed line of life. She was of essential use to her young friend, who was becoming care-worn, and absorbed in the details of her work. Her conscientious nature was worried and distressed with the ungrateful selfishness and inconsiderate quarrels of some of those she was helping. Gabrielle helped her to brush and laugh these off. She did a little hearty scolding for her, and produced a happy effect by her lively badinage. Alice was apt to take things seriously; but Gabrielle did not scruple to shut up a troublesome bore, or to ridicule an officious meddler. Yet so kind and cheerful was she, that she usually set things right, and rarely created offense. Alice became brighter and less burdened; and her good Dutch friend Mijnheer Koop said, "*Liebchen*, I was troubled for you; but now your color returns, and you can laugh merrily. My lady, you are *bienvenue.* Two are better than one,—yes, even two ladies—*waarde vriendin!*"

"Indeed, indeed they are," said Alice. "Dear Gabrielle, you have given me new life. Do you know, I was almost hating this sacred work, and running away."

"Now then," said Gabrielle, "I must have my way a little further. We all want a little diversion. I mean to open my house for company. I shall have *at-homes* weekly, and now and then an evening assembly. You must support me, Herr Koop,—specially to bring the English and Dutch educated people together, and to cultivate the company of men of letters, of science, and of art, and so to be merry and wise. Not at all will we give up our homes and refuges, our sick or orphans, but a little vary and color our lives."

Mijnheer Koop seemed delighted. "Excellent, *Gravin!*—I am at your service." Alice looked down, saying rather thoughtfully, "I am rather afraid of pleasure making us selfish."

"Good, saintly Alice! I know I am a temptress, and perhaps it is the old craving for excitement, flattery, and pleasure. I will give it all up. Only, I had a feeling that the two sorts of objects would mix, with benefit to us all."

"Perhaps they would," replied Alice, looking up. "I should like such meetings. Suppose you ask the Fleming?"

"Very prudent indeed, *liebchen,*" said quiet Koop.

"If you make him arbiter in such a case," said Gabrielle quickly, "you may as well veto it at once. Patriotism, politics, and religion fill up his stoical heart."

"How can *you* say so?" said Alice,—"you of all persons. But here he comes."

The case was stated by the fair pleaders, and, strange to say, the Fleming unhesitatingly said, with a warmth unusual to him, "Gabrielle is right in this. A continuous strain of severe care and work we were not meant for. If we deny ourselves the recreations of life, we pay dearly for the unnatural self-restraint. I know it too well, and am anxious to mend."

So Gabrielle opened her house, and by degrees the houses of others, Dutch and English, with the best results. The Countess was the courtliest of entertainers,—no mean proficient in music of the lyric and airy sort, quick in repartee, watchful of the comfort of every guest, and herself the spirit of life and happiness.

Meanwhile, another great change was perceptible. At first Gabrielle hesitated about joining in a Protestant service, and for a Sunday or two staid at home. But Van Ruyter, who attended perseveringly on the Fleming's sister, always returned with such encomiums on the Haringvleet service, which, under the circumstances, seemed to him a heaven on earth, that the Countess at last was induced to accompany them. On that day Bridge spoke with much force on the words, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also,"—showing that the heart inevitably improves or corrupts with its chief object. If worldly things are the idol, the human heart becomes more and more selfish and earthly. But he drew a fine picture of a soul fixing its aspirations on Divine, celestial, Christian things, and so becoming gradually divine, heavenly, and like the best of men, Jesus Christ. When the

service was over, the lady drew Alice aside, and said, "Dear Alice, did you tell your father to say that for me? He just knows all my poor history, and I think he has shown me the clew to my own unknown desires."

"Dearest friend, I do not suppose my father had the least intention of a personal reference to you, or to any one in particular; but come and ask him yourself."

"Yes, I will, but not just now. This evening tell him a learner wishes to sit at his feet."

"He will receive you like a father, I am sure." So the learner came to the teacher many times, and soon discovered the true pivot on which the heart turns from vain and disappointing self-satisfaction, to the enjoyment of a love and sympathy altogether above created love. The simple and high-souled faith of a man like Bridge, who was then suffering exile for the religion he professed, had great authority and attraction for a mind like Gabrielle's, and before long extricated her from the moldy traditions of mediæval superstition. From long experience in the vanity of the world, she was prepared to grow rapidly in the spiritual life, and to receive with intense desire the higher standards and richly satisfying assurances of the word of Christ.

While matters were in this happy progress, two or three letters arrived which had an important effect. Alice was seated alone with the Countess, when a letter came from George, thus,—

"Dear Alice,—War is a fearsome business, or else I might tell you of a brave victory on our side. We were permitted to obtain it after two stubborn days' fight, and I, only scratched, but not hurt. A good English friend of mine has come to us who loves fighting as a war-horse. We are going together to Bohemia, where is hotter work, and coming back here for all the hardest knocks, so that we may know how to save England at the right time. I assure you we do not fail in daily attention to religion with our men, that they may be good and brave. We care also for the wounded and prisoners. The Swedes are a bold and godly race, that it does one good to know. I am so glad you have found a good work for the poor; and be sure I never go into action without my worst thought being, 'Perhaps I may never see Alice again.' But hitherto all goes bravely.

"Your loving friend,
"GEORGE SHERWOOD."

When Alice had read this she turned very pale, and was so near fainting that Gabrielle ran to support her, and looked over the letter, saying, "Foolish lassie to cry at such good news!"

"But," almost cried poor Alice, "how long will his life be safe?"

"Dear coz, he will win honor, and live to fight for England. If sailors abandoned the sea after every storm, or even shipwreck, where would be the navy?"

"It may be foolish, my friend, but then he is——"

"Aye," said Gabrielle, "what is he? I heard you chided him for being a soldier, and let him go away down-hearted."

"Nay, did I?—I meant not that. But, Gabrielle, this soldiering is wild work, and makes them rebels against their own king."

"Who taught you such notions, dear?" said Gabrielle.

"See here, Gabrielle, is a letter from his brother Edward, who is in Cambridge University, studying for the Church. We were all playfellows together, and I love him too.

"'Dear Alice,—We are studying hard for our examinations. I hope to win honors, and as God helps me to be a better servant of Holy Church. How thankful I am to have staid in England! We hear the Swedes, with whom George is, are canting reprobates, and that some of our worst 'vipers' are there learning to be as bad. The Swedes are sure to be thrashed in the long-run, which is a bad chance for George. Pray Heaven, though, keep him safe! The Scotch are to be forced to have bishops: quite right, we say. England also will soon be subdued. I hope you are not giving up your religion in exile, for we hear those in America have become stark savages and heathen. In Holland they say you exiles have no Sabbath or churches, but hear fellows who preach atheism and epicurean pleasure. No doubt your father is sorry now; and if he only let the Bishop know, all would be right. When every Jack and Tom has his conscience, and chooses what he will do and pay, and what laws must be made, we shall never be a holy and happy nation. We all drink on our knees the King and Thorough. Your very loving,
'EDWARD SHERWOOD.'

"Poor Edward! he is all alone, and he gets further and further from us. What think you of this?" asked Alice.

"I have little sympathy with it. I have been a Catholic, perhaps am so. I know too much of priests' ways. But you see how utterly ignorant and deceived poor Edward is, and how he accepts all the hearsay that surrounds him. He will be worse yet. It is horrible!" exclaimed Gabrielle.

"But how can he help it?—and if we could but keep him right!" replied Alice sadly.

"Very good, dear Alice; only don't do injustice to others for his sake. Why, I had rather have the soldier's frank reality and care for his soldiers, than this shaveling's bigotry. His tie to you, Alice, seems to be the only one left to him. But, Alice dear, do not allow him to think you share his feelings. Undeceive him."

"I have; only he never notices what I say, and I cannot refuse to listen."

"*Prenez-garde,* Alice. But now be my confidant. Hear a letter from Albert, my foster-brother,—even worse than either of yours.

"Dear Gabrielle,—My uncle requires me to do what I shrink from sorely. The cause regarding my inheritance was decided yesterday in my favor, which places me in the awkward position of seeming to injure you, my benefactress. Indebted deeply to you, I would offer every reparation possible. I shall charge my estates with a liberal yearly sum for your maintenance, and in all necessary arrangements order my agents to be most considerate of your interests and delicacy.

"Your loving cousin,
"ALBERT VON BERGHEDT.

"P.S.—I don't like this letter, although obliged to write it. I met lately Captain Sherwood, who told me some things about you and your friend Van Diense which made me more sorry than ever. O Gabrielle, I am forced on,—do forgive me! ALBERT."

Long before this letter was finished, Alice was on her knees before the reader, looking up with tears in her eyes. At its close she exclaimed, "Oh, how shameful, dear Gabrielle, to have all your splendid inheritance wrested from you at a blow. Does the Fleming know of this?"

"Yes, I told him at once, and he seemed half glad. Meanwhile this change keeps me here, and it will be good for me to enjoy longer the influence of your good, wise father, who has saved me. This reverse will help me in getting my vain heart away from earth, and set upon a Heavenly Master. I thank God for it, though I feel a little while ago I should have been tempted to curse Him."

"Oh," said her sympathizing listener, how beautifully you can bear it! The Fleming could not be more noble."

"Alice, it is very much due to his example and influence. I am thankful for a test which shows my resolve to be not wholly unreal."

"I am glad," said Alice, "you will remain with us. You have done me and many more the greatest good. I think I should have broken down in faith but for you."

"No, you would not, Alice. You have an inward source of revival, which I begin to comprehend, 'Springing up into everlasting life.'"

Here the Fleming entered, and, approaching, said, "What, Gabrielle, does Alice say to your news?"

"Oh, she is too sweet and kind,—more than a sister, as you (even when I was not worthy of it) were, and are, *more than a brother!*" on which she gave him her hand, while Alice quietly slipped away.

"Inexpressible are my thanks and love, dearest Gabrielle," said the Fleming, very passionately, as he grasped and kissed her proffered hand. "The great change which I so long prayed for has wonderfully come about. We understand each other at last."

"I hope and believe," said she, "my blind eyes are opening to the reality of your unseen Master."

"Now," said Van Diense, "I could wish to be Count Von Arenberg again, and to have my estates to offer in lieu of your own."

"Oh, talk not of it; we never could have been so happy. It would never have come to this. Let us be as we are. God has willed it, and it is best."

"Be it so, dearest Gabrielle; yet I feel sure there will come a change one day, and these trials will meeten us for whatever the future unfolds."

As they thus conversed by a window at eventide, the clear rim of the moon rose over the horizon, flooding the dusky scene with white rays, and rapidly rising higher and higher, at last showed her full orb, and poured her whole radiance over the growing gloom of night.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE FLEMING IN LAMBETH PRISON.

"It might be months, or years, or days,—
I kept no count: I took no note;
I had no hope my eyes to raise,
And clear them of their dreary mote.
At last men came to set me free:
I asked not why, I recked not where;
It was at length the same to me,
Fettered or fetterless to be:
I learned to love despair."

BYRON.

NOT long after his happy agreement with Gabrielle, the Fleming found it necessary to visit England. Great caution was taken by him, and disguises were prepared especially for his stay in Norwich, where the Bishop was now all powerful. Arriving at the old city with a pedler's pack on his back, and a long black beard on his chin, he found his way to his own house. Here he surprised Gerhardt, who, however, only looked hard at his master for a moment, and then said, "What man art thou that thus, 'bescreened in night, so stumblest on my counsel?'"

To which the Fleming replied in character, "'By a name I know not how to tell thee who I am.'"

At which the shrewd servant said, shrugging his shoulders, "'If any of my kinsmen see thee here, they'll murder thee. I would not for the world they saw thee here.' In good sooth, master, be wary; spies are all about. Should Dr. Green or any of his crew discover thee, thy dungeon few will know." Then he learned that even the good Sherwoods would have been driven beyond the sea but for their son Edward having the living of St. Giles.

"He has returned to Norwich, then?"

"Aye, but a very different person! He might have been trained by the Jesuits at Rome. He is unwearied in making proselytes, and he succeeds specially with young ladies. 'Parsons and ladies both under the frock,' you know. Only one lady resists all his arts—the Doctor's daughter."

"Verily, you mean May Hope!—they were fast friends."

"So they are still," quoth Gerhardt.

"I must see the Alderman, and the Doctor also, Gerhardt. How can I manage that?"

"You have chiefly to fear Edward, who is much with both."

"But he would never denounce an old friend."

"Don't trust to that. He would betray his mother for Holy Church. 'The fox will sell his skin for a fat hen.'"

The Fleming, with much caution, approached the subject of Gerhardt's disappointment by observing, "I should like to have found you here, Gerhardt, in wedded union and happiness."

"My honored master, spare me! To you only I cannot keep my visor down,—only this subject is torture. I trusted a foolish girl, and she proved a flirt,—that's all."

"Gerhardt, you are too hard on a pretty lass."

"You little know, master. I am further now than ever from casting her out of my heart; yet my purpose is fixed, though I die of it. Dat is zeker en gewis."

"And though she die too, Gerhardt! Her heart is true as yours, and her sorrow as deep. Op mijn woord."

"How know you, my master? You have not seen her at Dereham."

"She is no longer there; she is in Rotterdam with my sister and Alice, who treat her as a friend. Any one can see her sadness, though she bears it prettily. But she will never get over her life-loss."

"Fanny in Holland!—how strange! But she will flirt there also with her victims."

"Nothing of the sort; no nun could be more coy. Every one sees the change."

"The age of miracles is past," said Gerhardt;

"yet if I thought such a wonder possible, I might be tempted to go and see. Mijnheer, I dare not hope;—another relapse would slay me. Ik waarschwu je (I warn you)."

"Do as your heart prompts,—the miracle is there. You both were the sport of a practiced villain, whom you know even better now. You must come over to Holland. I think you might pluck 'heartsease' there. Dat is beter."

The Fleming, with his pack, did adventure, notwithstanding Gerhardt's warning, to his old friend Alderman Sherwood's house, and was received with evident suspicion. The master came out to the hall, attended by Edward himself in priest's dress—a tall, pale, but handsome man, who looked very hard at the disguised visitor.

"We want not your foreign vanities here," said Edward, "and we want no intercourse with Holland. I advise you to return while you are free." So saying, he departed, as if in haste. The Fleming drew his old friend into a room, where he made himself known. Though welcomed, and his news of the Bridges and George received with deep interest, yet his old friend seemed nervous, and eager to close the interview. "My friend," he said, "forgive me,—we live here in a state of siege. My clerical son, I fear, suspects you. It goes against my heart to be so inhospitable, but you have no safety here." They embraced, and parted.

The Fleming called on his friend Brightling, and found him alone in his study. He had a pile of books before him, and was carefully observing plants and insects in water.

"Ah!" said Brightling, rising from a stoop to his full height, and looking keenly over his glasses, "who are you? Have you the water from the Bramerton ditch, and the plants I wanted?" But then, recognizing an old friend, he gave his hand, saying, "Dear friend, excuse me,—my eyes are weakened by study. How is dear Bridge and his family, and George, and the other exiles?—and what are you doing here? My friend Bishop Wren (though I hate his doings) would be glad to lay hold of you. These troubles drive me to my books and bottles, where I find a religion of free inquiry and peaceful thought." The Fleming communicated his news, and obtained certain information. He was leaving, when Lucy suddenly returned from a walk.

"What, dad!" she said, "one of your rustic explorers? What new weed is he palming off on you? What have you been fool enough to pay him? Ha! this is a peddler;—open your wallet, fellow. What have you for an old witch like me?—any rare old books?"

"Madam, I hope you will find what you desire. See here!" gently said the Fleming.

The lady started at the voice, saying, "Why, Van Diense!—you here! Beware! I met Edward Sherwood just now,—he was on the way to the Palace. I stopped and questioned him. He said he had seen some one who ought not to be in the city. Ought he to inform against an old friend? I laughed, and asked who made him chief constable."

Later on, the Fleming also called on Dr. Hope, who to his surprise knew him at once. Being obliged to leave for a professional visit, he commended the visitor to May. As they were seated at her tea-table, in full flow of discourse about absent friends, who should walk in but Edward. The Fleming had his pack open, and May bent over it.

"Ah, May,—pardon my intrusion," said the priest, pausing on the threshold.

"Pray come in," said she, laughing: "you can make me a present from these pretty things."

"If you will promise to help in me a case of charity—— What!" he abruptly exclaimed,—"I think I have seen you, sir, already at my father's?"

Van Diense, seeing he was known, put a brave face on the matter, and replied, "Having important matters here, I could not leave without seeing my former friends, and telling them all I knew of those they love. I saw your brother recently, Edward."

Edward looked very pale, and said, "Mr. Van Diense, you are indeed an old friend of our youth, and I should be loath to act against you, but public duty is before private feeling. Your presence here breaks the law, and is pretty sure proof of some conspiracy. I must not keep your secret."

"My dear Edward, remember I have never been a British subject, so that the sentence against me is null. I am leaving Norwich to-morrow, and came here to give news which some at least have been grateful for."

"Indeed we have!" said May. "Oh, Edward!" never look so cold, for your heart yearns for such news, I am sure."

"Surely it does," said the young man; "and I would like to hear all Mr. Van Diense can tell; but then my vows!"

"I had supposed," rejoined May, with a look of winning frankness, "the chief vow of all was charity."

"But I cannot become a guilty accessory."

"Oh, Edward, can you speak so! At all events, wait till my father returns. Go on, please, with what you were telling." The Fleming then described George's last news from the army, and the pleasant life of Alice and Gabrielle at Rotterdam. Edward heard quietly, now and then putting a question, when suddenly a carriage stopped at the porch.

"My father!" said May, springing out to meet him. She soon returned, looking sad, and said, "Edward, my father wants you at once. T., your parishioner, is dying, and he will take you to him." Immediately Edward rose and went away. No sooner was he gone, than May quietly beckoned the Fleming to a back door, saying, "Farewell, you must find some better disguise for Norwich eyes!" Edward soon returned, when to his dismay he saw the empty seat.

"Oh, May!" said the angry priest, "I thought you were my friend!"

"So I am," she replied; "and I have saved you from a great sorrow and a great sin."

The Fleming lost no time, but next day was on his way to Huntingdon, where Cromwell (recently returned home) expected him eagerly. He found the patriot leader living under the greatest precaution in his own house, seemingly a rough country citizen, in coarse dress, and with burgher surroundings. The Fleming knew, however, that he was holding private communications with all the foremost spirits of the time. He was full of praise of the Swedes, and of George. Cromwell said that the first hope of dawn had just come from Scotland, where it was rumored that the people of Edinburgh had risen in arms to resist the imposition of the English liturgy, and that an old woman had broken the Dean's head with her joint-stool. This resistance had led to the taking of a National Covenant (1638) by the nobles and people to defend their religious liberties. Cromwell wept great tears as he related these events, and wished there was such a religious zeal in his own land. War once begun with Scotland, must lead to a Parliament in England, "and then"—and Cromwell dashed his closed fist on the oak table—"it will be seen what preparations we have been privately making! These Eastern Counties at least will be found pretty well banded together in firm opposition to arbitrary rule.

"But come," said the patriot, "you must support your character;—my wife and girls will never forgive me if I send a peddler forth without their curiosity being satisfied." So he led him to a sitting-room where they were all assembled. His wife beckoned him: "Come, good fellow, we are glad to see foreign knick-knacks and patterns. Art thou from France or Holland?" The pack was opened, and the girls made their father prisoner while they selected presents.

"Oh, mother, this lace was made for your shapely neck and shoulders—was it not, father?" said Frances.

"Here's a pretty flask for father in his rides," cried Bridget.

"And this scent is what you like, Bridget," said the mother;—"at least your young officer will accept it."

The member of Parliament lost all his sternness; his laugh was merry and tender; and finally he settled the whole account, and drew away his friend with the heartiest invitation to come again.

Arriving in London, the Fleming made his way to the Dutch Embassy. There, as everywhere, he found a great reserve and mystery of outer life. He had interviews with the popular leaders who had survived death and treachery. These were all hopeful that the worst was over; elated with the Scotch rising; and, expectant of a Parliament, they heard with interest of Cromwell's vigorous preparations.

"A great genius, sir," said Hampden, "both for statesmanship and for war; and all devoted to God."

Wherever the Fleming went, one of the Dutch *attachés* accompanied him, and often suddenly gave him warning to be silent, or to change his direction. Under these circumstances, London had lost to him its former attractions. Instead of walking the streets as a free man, indulging his curiosity about the various sights and shows, he seemed to be creeping through a dark labyrinth, conscious of unseen traps and lurking foes, as in a settlement of savages. One day in Westminster, while passing near the ferry, he found himself watched by a party of men-at-arms, who forced him down the stairs and into a boat, which they rowed over toward Lambeth Palace.

The Fleming at once understood he was in the power of the dreadful Laud, the all-powerful Minister.

After some detention in the guard-house, he was summoned to Laud's presence. The little great man, who was seated in his chair of office, nodded slightly, and said, "Well, Master Van Diense, things are changed since we last met! How did you leave the foolish band of outcasts who have flung themselves on the cold charity of the Dutch? They shall never return while I live,—that canting fellow Bridge specially, on whose flight I wrote to His Majesty, 'Bridge has left two livings and a lectureship, and fled to Holland.' The King returned my report with these sensible words, '*We are well rid of him.*' How came you to London? Have you no fear of the consequences?"

"Your Grace, why should I fear, as a simple merchant?"

"Ah, you were also a simple merchant when you carried letters for the Queen and Buckingham, and brought secret papers—stolen or forged—in order to injure me. But you see, I have survived your mischievous designs."

"Your Grace," returned the Fleming, "has risen so high as to afford to be forgiving."

"And you, sir, have so strangely fallen into my hands, that you can afford to be communicative."

"But your Grace is in a position to know everything."

"Perhaps I do know a little. Pray who did you see at Norwich, and at Huntingdon, and here at the Dutch Embassy?"

"I might tell your Grace a good deal, and yet evade your meaning; but you know me too well to suppose I shall turn informer."

"Oh," said Laud with a bitter laugh, "we find many men happy to inform when the right means are applied. A little confinement and physical suffering are shrewd questioners."

"Your lordship has said enough to seal my lips," indignantly returned his prisoner.

"No one is so well versed as yourself, Mr. Van Diense, in the designs of our malignants, both abroad and at home. For the good of the country I want to discover who they are and what are their plans."

The Fleming, with a resolved look, replied, "About such matters I shall be silent as the grave."

"Speak not so lightly of your grave, which may be now digging, not far off. In these times, sir, we cannot dally for men's foolish scruples."

Then turning to an attendant, he said, "Take the prisoner to his cell;" and to Van Diense he added, "I give you a brief time of reflection. A message to say that you will give me the information I require will soon end your troubles. Farewell, sir,—*we Jesuits have been too strong for you.*" The Fleming was led away, down-stairs, through galleries and rooms crowded by prisoners, of whom all the places of detention were then over full. His heart sank low within him; but there was still a hope that Laud would call him to another interview, and that the Ambassador would interfere. Many of the prisoners appeared to be wretched objects, while others kept up a boisterous gayety, though the jailers quieted them with fierce threats and blows. Women and children, as well as men and clergymen, were mixed with bankrupts and felons;—there were too many of them to be shut up alone, for all the rooms brimmed over. Few noticed the fresh arrival; but one respectable man beckoned the Fleming within, and expressed his deep regret, asking what had brought him there. He did not hesitate to state his position; when his informant said, "Once I would have applauded your noble spirit; but oh, calamity forces down the spring of one's courage! Do anything you can to regain liberty,—anything, however base. The life we lead here is infernal! Always crowded with noisy blackguards, no retirement,

meager food—taken like animals, as we can snatch it, no hope of justice,—here we abide till death, unless some accident or trick release us. We do not know each other, nor even do the jailers know us personally. Laud will soon forget all about you, and you will be, like the rest, a permanent inmate of this vile Tartarus."

A yet more dismal oppression weighed on the soul of the Dutch patriot, as he saw round him evidences of the truth of this awful description, which took from him the last ray of hope. The closeness, foul smells, filth, noise, and profanity were such as he had never seen, or even dreamed of.

He had also unwittingly incurred the dislike of one jailer, who never came by without aiming a cuff, or stroke, or a vile reproach at him. Time passed, and he began to think he was indeed forgotten of friend and foe, and must make up his mind to continual incarceration. The jailers kept back his food till he knew the real pangs of hunger; they stole the best parts of his clothes, leaving him more exposed to the stout whips and thongs with which they were armed. How long he had been confined he could not reckon; but it seemed ages since he had walked about as a free agent, and the hope of being so again seemed quite unnatural.

One day, however, there was a stir in the jail, and it was reported that an inspection was taking place. A small party was conducted through the passages, and all stood up before them. As they approached, the Fleming thought he recognized the *attaché* of the Dutch Embassy, and his heart leapt within him. The Dutchman came on, and singled him out. He whispered his name in his ear, adding, "Draw inside the cell, and while we talk change hats with the man behind me, take his cloak, and follow me away." When this change was quickly effected, he followed in the train of the *attaché*, who turned to go back. Van Diense had some qualms about the man left in his place, but the Dutchman at once assured him that he would be safe. So they slowly passed through the iron gates and the guard-room. They were passing down to the boat when the jailer who hated the Fleming came rushing after them, and collared him. The *attaché* quietly said, "Fellow, leave my servant alone!" and slipped some gold pieces into the rascal's hand, who then walked away, muttering, "Let him go,—I should surely have killed him if he had stopped with us."

When they were seated in the boat, lively congratulations passed. For the first time in his life the stout, calm Fleming burst into tears, and sobbed hysterically. By degrees he was told that the man who had now remained in his place was a Dutch sailor on the books of a ship in the Thames. To-morrow the master and another *attaché* would go and demand him, without fear of his delivery. They soon arrived at the friendly Embassy, where Van Diense threw himself into the Ambassador's arms, saying, "I was in hell, and should have been doomed for life, but you have saved me!"

"My friend, forgive our delay; but I was obliged to wait till your keepers had forgotten you."

CHAPTER XXIX.

DEATH SOLVES WRONGS.

"La! des femmes portant le nom chéri de Sœurs.
D'un zèle affectueux prodiguent les douceurs,
O courage touchant! Ces tendres bienfaitrices
Dans un séjour infecte ou sont tous les supplices
De mille êtres suffrants prevenant les besoins,
Surmontent les degouts des plus penible soins."
LEGOUVE.

On an occasion when the English party were gathered at the Pastor's house, Dame Norris, putting her hand on his arm, said, "Dear Pastor, when, think you, shall we see old England again, and the dear Tombland Church?"

"Who can say?—God's will be done. But St. George's is not vacant now."

"But it must be. That man could not oppose you.—so beloved, so cruelly used!" said Grace Friend, with energy.

"But if we returned there," said Hannah Vores, "we could not have any prayers,—that is, not the responses. I fear the reading-desk must come down—and the kneeling-rail from the Communion—and the organ-pipes be stopped;—and, dear sir, the Scriptures can never be expounded—nor the beadle carry a mace—oh, Ichabod!—yet I like the free prayers, and taking bread and wine together like a real supper. So, if the heart's right, perhaps these things do not matter."

Mr. Ridgeley observed that "the question was not immediate. It would be some time before they returned. Things in England would change. The English Church must be reformed, and they go back to help its reformation. But they must not be too extreme."

Madam Ridgeley added, "I always agree with my dear husband, but yet never have I so enjoyed my Sundays, and never has my beloved pastor seemed so near to us all! I should miss our pleasant Dutch ways greatly."

Charlotte Ridgeley, laughing, said, "Oh, mother, I know what you would miss,—your nice basket-stove under your feet all sermon-time! Oh, how cold St. George's was in winter! I am sure all the ladies will carry home this innovation, which greatly improves the service."

On this, Allen, the assistant preacher, said, "After all, I hope we shall return to worship in St. George's. I can imagine our present liberty being carried out by a little alteration in the forms of service. If we ever go back, at least Bishop Wren and Dr. Green must have first disappeared."

"Once again," said the Pastor, "my word is 'the will of the Lord be done,'—He will open the way and remove the difficulties. He has not sent us here in vain; and I think, with my brother, that we shall carry back our new lessons to Norwich, and even St George's."

At one of the Lady Gabrielle's assemblies, Bridge declared that much as he had dreaded exile, he had found it the greatest blessing of his life. He should carry home a warm love for Holland.

Mijnheer Koop replied that "the Dutch had feared the coming of the proud English; but they had been pleasantly disappointed. The English ladies, especially, had earned the gratitude of Rotterdam." He wished "they might never go away." At this there was quite a murmur of approval.

The news from George had spoken of battles and sieges both by the Rhine and in Pomerania, under Bannier, the Swedish general. At the time when this letter was written, Cromwell was still George's comrade, and both considered the Swedish camps the first school of arms and of military virtue. They had been present together at the sieges of the chief Pomeranian cities, and had taken a distinguished part in the invasion of Saxony. As Cromwell, after the decisive victory of Prague, paused on his strong charger, with the point of his stained sword resting on his mailed boot, and George pulled up from a gallop to congratulate him, he exclaimed, "In a few months, George, we shall be charging the tyrants at home on the hills and plains of enslaved England. They will be led by Prince Rupert yonder, who, trained in the headstrong school of the Imperialists, has helped to lose this day by not knowing when to draw bridle. We will teach them coolness, as well as fury."

One fine morning as Alice and her friend were preparing to start to their orphanage, they were pleased to see the glee-maiden on her mule, led by her noble-looking father, approaching from the Iselmonde road. They learnt that they had come rapidly from the army, and when further interrogated they reluctantly admitted they bore painful news.

"Oh," cried Alice, "speak at once!—say the worst. Is he——" and then she stood like a statue, waiting for the worst.

"Nay," said the maiden, "lady, be not downcast; it is true that Colonel George Sherwood was wounded in the last battle, but he had revived when we saw him on his tent couch. He sent us to tell you of his hopes to be better, and of his love. But the doctor afterward informed us his case was perilous; and if his friends could provide nursing or help, or wished to see him, they should do so at once."

"Dear George!—let us go to him," said Alice, "though it may be too late."

"We will go together," said Gabrielle.

The resolution formed was allowed by the parents of Alice. So it was settled; and with small delay they started, the glee-maiden and father acting as guides.

Already the consciousness of doing something had composed the fluttered spirits of the ladies. The maiden also said there was another knight or young lord wounded, and a prisoner, in the next tent to George, whom she had heard named as *Albert*, and she thought *Berghem*. He was almost as fair and small as a lady. Gabrielle started, and exclaimed: "Why, that must be my cousin and supplanter! He was sent to the wars, I know, to attain fame. Merciful Providence! if I should be allowed to revenge myself by nursing him to recovery!" This revelation added eagerness to their speed.

By the Duke of Saxe-Weimar they were most courteously received, and assured that the colonel was still living, though in a very weak state; and that he had scarcely an officer on whose recovery he set so much store, from his valor in fight and wisdom in council.

The glee-maiden was first led to George's tent, to prepare the way by declaring that the ladies were on their road. George, whose state was lethargic and low-spirited, was roused as the doctor had never seen him. When the Baron brought in Alice and Gabrielle, George looked up with his first smile, and faintly said: "Ladies, I make but a poor warrior; how very good you are." Care was taken not to over-excite his weak nerves, but from this happy start he never went back entirely. Will Barnard continued as his personal attendant, as he had been from the first.

After the loving salutations were over, "Lady Gabrielle," said George, pointing to the next tent, "there lies your cousin;—I fear he is no better."

The lady at once proceeded to visit Albert, while Alice was glad to be alone with George, and quietly pour out her affection. Gabrielle found the fair and gentle youth tossing, with flushed skin, delirious eye, and shrill voice, exchanging moans of pain with expressions of feverish imagination. Gabrielle's tears rose as she heard him say: "Uncle, I cannot do it—it is not mine—she is so good! Oh, Gabrielle!—and now she has wounded me,—yes, it was she in the silver helmet. Oh, it burns—it smarts! Shall I ever be forgiven?" Gabrielle knelt by the couch, and took his thin hand. "Dear Albert," she said, "do you know me? It is Gabrielle, who loves you."

At once there seemed a slight tremor and a quieter mood. He lay still—his face quiet, his lips closed. But oh, so like the stillness of death! The raving and cries and excitement were passed, and Gabrielle feared she had been too hasty, and that he was gone. It was not so, nor was there any sign that he knew her; but many times, when the fever was at its height, Gabrielle came, and with such words of kindness allayed the storm. So the ladies began their work of nursing, aided by their Rotterdam experience. Nor did they confine their aid to their friends, but in many an officer's tent, and by many a poor Swedish and English soldier's pallet, were they as ministering angels.

Among the services which the ladies rendered to the Swedish army, the greatest was the nursing of the noble commander, Bernard, the Duke of Saxe-Weimar, who after taking Thau, was crossing the Rhine near Hunninguen, where he fell sick. The symptoms were very serious, and led to a suspicion of foul play. The two English ladies waited on him assiduously, but in vain. Though but thirty-five, and in the height of vigor and reputation, he sank rapidly; and after scenes of most Christian resignation, like his great master, Gustavus, he expired, commending his soul and his country to the Lord. This death of the Duke Bernard caused a breaking-up of the great Swedish army. George at length resigned his commission, and received at all hands most flattering testimonials of every sort of distinction.

It was resolved to remain near the Rhine until the two patients might be able to bear removal. The fine troop of Norwich soldiers camped round them, and from time to time George allowed parties of these to come in and see their leader. George, though weak, was steadily recovering his animation and drollery, which Gabrielle heartily returned; while Alice, as he grew better, shrunk a little back into modest reserve. "Alice," George would say, "are you thinking of your mother and father, or of my brother Edward, or of your Rotterdam school, that you look so serious?"

"Of none," frankly said the maiden. "I was but realizing, in the Duke's death, and the state of your friend, what a narrow escape we have had of losing you too."

"Good, kind girl! I am unworthy to guess your thoughts; but convalescence makes one rather wild."

"And no one enjoys to see you so more than Alice," said Gabrielle. "I wish my cousin made such progress." Then they talked softly of

their fears for him. He had become calmer, and was once or twice on the point of recognizing those about him. Gabrielle's power of soothing him had never ceased, and the doctor had said that if he became conscious, probably strength would soon fail.

Just then the attendants came forward to say there was a change, and they hastened to his couch. When they entered, the frail youth looked toward them, and said, "My guardian angels! Oh, Gabrielle, you must go away—you hate me!"

She took his hand, and cooled his brow, and said gently, "Albert, we are friends; forget what troubles you."

"Nay, I cannot,—I must undo it." Then turning to the priest, who was at hand, he said, "Father, bring the paper I asked for just now: write and witness, and I will sign the renunciation of your property, Gabrielle. I did not quite understand what I did; I was told to do it for the Church's sake. Your friend Captain Sherwood first opened my eyes. Now I see it was robbery. Cousin, forgive me!"

"Dear cousin, do not exert yourself. I love you—I never blamed you. The Saviour who died for all, forgives all. His 'blood cleanseth from all sin.'"

Here Albert moved for the priest's crucifix, and having kissed it often, he feebly marked his name to the deed while his hand was guided, and then he seemed full of peace. His young, handsome face beamed, and with his wan hand in Gabrielle's he died, saying, "O Christe recipe!"

They had scarcely recovered from this affecting scene, when, to their surprise, Herr Ruyter entered, announcing the Count Von Arenberg, and the Fleming appeared. He entered seriously into their sorrow, and it was some time ere he could refer to his own adventures and escapes. When he did so, he touched lightly on his escape in Norwich, at which George and Alice exchanged glances, both whispering, "What, Edward!—how could he do it?" He described more fully his London adventures, which made them shudder for horror at the Lambeth dungeon. Then he told of his visit to Paris, where he had recourse to the Dutch Embassy for advice, and found that in the French State office was the deed of restoration by the Spanish Ministry, complete, except the actual execution, which on the death of Buckingham the foes of the Fleming had been able to prevent. The Minister of the States at once called for this document to be completed, and the French Minister communicated with the Spanish Ambassador.

Meanwhile the Fleming resolved to call on Gabrielle's mother, however opposed she had appeared to him. On his arrival at the Hotel Berghem, he found the uncle closeted with his sister. The Fleming was admitted, and found them in evident anxiety from the recent news of the fatal wound of Albert, and the presence of Gabrielle in the camp.

The two defeated and chagrined old conspirators were a study. They both assured the Fleming they should never have pursued such a course but for the interests of religion.

"What!" replied he, "does your religion teach you to deceive a youth into base ingratitude and treachery, and to rob two persons of their inheritance, which both are likely notwithstanding to recover? And having the honor to be accepted of your daughter, you should hear with pleasure that in a few days I hope to recover my rightful position."

"Ah," said the uncle, "if Buckingham had lived, you would; but now——"

"Now, Count, the French Court are about to do me justice, and to require your assent."

"Never! never!" cried both the angry relatives.

"Would it not be better," answered the calm Fleming, "to accept the inevitable with some dignity; or have you, madam, any other husband for Gabrielle; or you, sir, any fresh foundling as heir to your estates? Madam, I speak as a friend, or even a son,—if for Gabrielle's sake you will permit me. The houses of Berghem and Arenberg were wont to be long united: their lands march together, and they have often intermarried."

"But you are a heretic!" exclaimed the mother.

"So, madam, alas! are many of the Dutch nobility, and of the German, and even French. Heretics, madam, do not learn to repudiate their Catholic relations. When Gabrielle and I return to Brussels we shall gladly receive you,—and you too, sir,—with all proper honor." This last shot seemed to tell powerfully on these selfish souls; so that in a few days the requisite deed came to the Embassy with full authorization, and Van Diense was acknowledged as the Count Von Arenberg.

It was now resolved as soon as possible to move George to Brussels, and thence to Rotterdam; to all which he, with his old spirit, said, "And so the lady will wed the trader, and the lovely maid of honor will be a Dutch *mevrouw!*"

"And," added Alice, "the wounded knight will put his sword into its scabbard, and learn war no more."

"Agreed," said George, "until a certain willful lady shall pray him to draw it in the cause of dear old England."

CHAPTER XXX.

PLIGHTED TROTH AND WEDDING-BELLS.

"Und finden sich verwandte Seelen
Auf wechsel-wollem Lebensmeer
Die sich in Lieb' und Treu vermählen
Wird auch der fromme Wunsch nicht fehlen
Dem Herrn sei Lob und Ehr."

STURM.

It was not long before George, reclining on a litter, with the Count Von Arenberg, the Lady de Berghem, the Baron Van Ruyter, and their attendants, escorted by Colonel George Sherwood's gallant English troops, filed along the road leading from the noble Rhine. By easy stages they reached Brussels, where the two princely mansions were opened to them. They rested in them but a short time; when George, now able to mount on horseback, took the command of his soldiers, and they pressed forward to Rotterdam, looking for news from England which might soon involve an entire revolution in their plans.

At pretty Islemonde they were delighted to find the barge awaiting them, with the Allens accompanying Bridge and his wife, who were full of eagerness to welcome their daughter and the convalescent soldier. Again reclining on soft cushions, they enjoyed the beautiful approach to Rotterdam, this time driven on by a fresh breeze, which gave speed to the clouds, foam to the rippling waves, and pleasant impulse to their bark.

They had much to tell each other which letters had not expressed. They congratulated the Count and Countess on their reinstatement in their rightful position, and Bridge jecularly supposed they would be Dutch grandees now, and must abandon England.

"I hope not," said Gabrielle; "when, at least, England will admit us."

"Oh, there is hope," said Bridge; "for the Scotch are invading the North, and Strafford is coming home from Ireland, and there must soon be a Parliament."

"Then," said George, "I must hasten home with my men, for Cromwell will soon want us."

"I believe he holds some appointment in the Eastern Counties, under the Earl of Kimbolton, to see after the train-bands in that part of England."

"Good!" said George; "that will be in the King's name. Alice, even you will bid me obey that call?"

"I fear, George, that will be but a pretext for resisting the annointed monarch afterwards. But you are not strong yet. Gabrielle, must not the nurses detain him?"

"Nay," replied Gabrielle,

"'When the knight can mount his steed,
The nurse must him to duty speed,'—

a French refrain which I suppose is general experience."

The Boompjees were lined with all the English exiles, the Burgemeester and the Raad, and a vast throng of the gentle and simple of the kind Dutch people. Many were the hearty shouts and warm greetings as they stepped ashore, and proceeded through lines of smiling people to their homes. George found letters from Cromwell and others, as he expected, calling him home at once, and offering him a command in Norfolk, at the same time explaining the urgent need of strenuous preparation, that the Court party might not gain hold of the garrisoned forts and of the militia in that District. Cromwell proposed to meet him at home, and give him personal instructions.

The Count greatly approved of his resolve to leave at once, and said, "Go, George, though we would gladly keep you; for I suppose, if you are in such haste, you must lose my wedding."

"Oh," said George, "how sorry I shall be. But, at last, you will be happy; and you have waited so long."

"I hope my sister will be happy too," said the Count.

"Ah, no doubt!—he is a fine young fellow, the Baron Van Ruyter. Send him as English Ambassador."

"But we shall not be quite happy, George, till your 'white lily' gives herself to you."

"I have my spurs to win, and my perils to run, and I hope my country to save, before that can be. But you know my heart; and I believe there is no doubt as to hers."

One social evening was permitted before George and his soldiers embarked for the English shore. Bridge gave them a grand address in the English Church that evening, marked by the fervor of his faith, and the whole service was memorable for the impressive scene. The prospect of the close of exile—the mercies received—the going over to Canaan, not for peaceful settlement, but to fight for home and conscience — the terrible civil collision — the breach of families—the dubious issues—the possibility of being driven back again,—all these ideas powerfully affected the audience. The eyes of men and soldiers were moist with fast-falling tears as these themes were touched on, and as they were reminded that the God of Israel was with them, and that the victory must be won by piety as well as by valor. The church of the Haringvleet, which had become dear as a place of worship to the exiles, never looked more interesting than when filled by that body of martial and resolute youth who were devoting themselves as soldiers of England and of the Gospel. The simplicity of the building, with its dark oak pannels and stalls, the twilight gloaming with its picturesque shades; the Pastor's noble figure, his hands outstretched in blessing; and the air tremulous with sighs, sobs, and repressed utterances,—all gave a most reverend air to the spectacle. When that touching service had closed with the solemn sacrament, George led Alice home, and their walk along the broad quiet streets was not interrupted. "Alice, dearest, you see I ought to go, and that I hope to make a way for the return of you all ere long?"

"Yes, George; though it is a sad necessity, and though I would strengthen you, my heart is weak as I realize what you have suffered, and may again,—and what thousands will have to suffer. But take with you my dear father's zeal."

"I hope I do," said George. "I believe in the cause, and in its success at last. I shall be near to protect my parents and old Norwich friends."

"And, George, you will be tender to Edward, and preserve him from evil consequence in the change of times?"

"Surely;—I will treat him better than he did the Fleming. But let that Green beware, and keep far from Norwich."

"George, let not a great patriotic struggle be lowered by personal grudges."

"Alie, you must let me sweeten them by the chivalrous affection of love. The Lady Gabrielle and Hannchen Van Dieuse are examples of condescending beauty. I wish I could enjoy these marriages, and there find a suitable time for pleading my own cause. But, Alie, you well know my long and entire devotion to yourself. Will you let me carry away the delicious hope of living to make you happy, in a home of our own, when these public troubles and duties are over?"

Alie was silent, though deeply moved, when George took her hand and said, "If God spares us to meet under such circumstances, will you, Alie, give me now as a token, the knot of ribbons near your heart?" A moment she hesitated, then raised her hand, disengaged the ribbons, and reached them to him. He kissed her hand, and warmly embraced her; and then they wandered home, muttering the soft, honied words of love under the gentle mantle of the evening gloom.

The next day George sailed away, and in Rotterdam excitement began to arise on the approaching marriages. It would be foreign to our purpose to describe these ceremonies with minuteness, now that events are hastening our return to English soil, and to more serious doings.

The two weddings took place in the large St. Lawrence Dutch church, lent for the occasion.

The grand old Cathedral, with its ancient monuments, was lighted up by bright sunshine. A vast number of Dutch people of all ranks, with the body of English residents, filled the ample area. The two bridal processions entered by either aisle, and showed richly as they grouped round both sides of the communion table. The splendid organ pealed forth its soft rushing music, while now and then the deeper notes rolled round the edifice, making the very stone pillars to tremble. Luther's Hymn was sung by the whole body of people, as they waited for the service to open, with the grandest effect. Then there was a sudden silence of eager expectation as the brides and bridegrooms took their places, and the good Pastor, Bridge, poured out his heart in prayers and exhortations on this delightful occasion.

The Fleming, outwardly composed, but full of sensitive feeling, watched Gabrielle, to anticipate every want. When he whispered at the close, "My own!" Gabrielle looked fondly at him, saying, "Alas! I have always felt unworthy of you,—I feel it still."

Weddings are said to be seed-plots of fresh engagements. Soon after these important events, Mijnheer Koop called on the Pastor, accompanied by a handsome youth, son of the Burgemeester, and richest merchant in the city, —Hans Hoboken. The old gentleman introduced his young friend as having been desperately smitten with the charms of the English Rector's daughter. The swain said little himself, but Koop made up for his silence.

"I wish I was young myself, sir," he said, "for I never knew so charming a friend: she is as beautiful as she is good. I hope, sir, her heart is her own at present? You will allow us to see her, and plead with herself? You have no objection, I hope? She will be richly provided, made very happy, and allowed to be in England a good part of the year. Oh, I will take good care of her, and my friend will be a good husband. Reken op mij (count on me)."

Mr. Bridge, rather taken aback, cordially expressed his sense of this unexpected honor. It was not the English way to bias the lady's choice. She would be too bashful to see both gentlemen. If it were Heer Koop only!—"She loves you, sir, like a second father; but let me prepare the way, and in a short time she will give an explicit answer."

Both gentlemen thanked the Rector for his kindness, but Koop begged hard to see Alice himself; so his companion withdrew, and presently Alice came to her old friend.

"*Liebchen*," said he, taking her hand, "I feel like a sort of father to you after all our work together.

"I am sure," replied Alice, "no one could have acted more like one;—indeed, I am happy to be your daughter."

"Ah, very good!—then good daughters take their fathers' advice, and I want to make my daughter a Dutch woman."

"Well, I am half a Dutch woman in heart."

"Very good indeed! Then you have a heart?"

"Surely I hope so."

"You know what I mean. There is a fine young friend of mine—son of our richest merchant, young Hoboken—who loves you, and will be miserable if you will not accept him. Waarlijk—geloof mij (truly—believe me)."

"But I hardly know him, my friend."

"Will you let him see you, and learn to know him better? I assure you he is good stuff, and comes of as good a stock as any in Rotterdam."

"But I am only a poor exile, and my father a poor man, ruined with persecution."

"Ah, my dear, you shall not be so poor. I am your father, and I have no children; and whether you marry Hans or not, you shall have a good share of what I have. Now, do think of it, and believe that I love you; and consent to see Hans, and make him happy."

"My dear friend, you overwhelm me. Is it you or Hans Hoboken who loves me? If it were you, I could hardly deny you anything; and if it is he, I must tell my father a secret,—I fear he comes too late! Dear sir, you have seen Colonel Sherwood,—we have been friends from youth."

"Ah, sets the wind in that quarter? Spreekt ge in ernst? (Are you in earnest?) I must be getting blind. He is a fine fellow, and, as I hear, has proved a brave soldier. Well, I fear Hans must give it up, and not risk a heartbreak. Your Colonel may get more blows than riches in the wars,—so recollect I am your father, and will see to the dowry." Here she kissed his hand, and he her forehead, and so the interview closed; and Alice refused her rich lover, but she gained a second father.

Matters went on steadily for some time, when one day the English colony was startled by the appearance of John Allen, who had paid a visit to Norwich, and now returned. He seemed brimful of delight, and waved his hat, shouting, "Hark, friends!—a Parliament is summoned, and you may all come home! Here are letters from the Colonel and his father, and from Dr. Hope, to certify what I say. So let's have a good English hurrah!"

At his words, as by a spell, the English exiles gathered fast, and they listened and gazed and shook hands, and then joined in lusty hurrahs which woke up the place. A council was speedily convened to read the letters and consider what to do. It appeared that the Scotch invasion was over, the King having made peace at Berwick. The elections had already been in favor of the most popular leaders. Parliament had assembled on the 13th April, 1639, and its further utterances were very cautious, but there seemed every hope of liberty reviving. With regard to Norwich, things had greatly changed. At the first idea of a Parliament, the Bishop shut himself up in the Palace all the time of the election, in which the Puritans gained a complete victory. George told how Edward retained his living, and was busy in his work, and likely to be unmolested; and May Hope wrote to Alice, she "thought he was rather ashamed of his former tutor and of Stephen Wren, who had turned out a thorough libertine and sot. She thought these emetics had somewhat cleared Edward's constitution, and that, after all, he was as fine a fellow as his brother at the bottom." At first there was one eager wish among the exiles to return in a few days; but then they found a scrap of a note from Cromwell, inclosed by George, which ran as follows: "Beloved of the Lord, be wary;—reaction is setting in;—see you are not caught in the coil of the spring. This winter is like to see an early *dissolution*. The Court does not yet feel its real helplessness. The patriots are hardly awake. Things will be worse before they are better. Do not go before Providence, but wait upon it."

This sagacious warning made all resolve to wait the turn of events. Nevertheless, they all began to talk and prepare, as if the long-looked-for signal were not far off; and the longer the crisis was delayed, the more decisive it was sure to be.

CHAPTER XXXI.

GERHARDT CATCHES A DOVE.

"Und nur das Herz dem bittere Thränen
Demuth und Liebe hat gelehrt
Trägt einen Schatz in seinem Grunde
Der mehr als Meeres perlen werth.

Drum klage nicht wenn Thränen quellen
Und sammle sie in Demuth ein
Die Perlen sinds die Gottes Liebe
Gelegt in deines Horzens Schrein."

NORDHEIM.

One day as Alice was calling at the house of her worthy friend Koop, she heard English voices in his outer office which struck her as familiar; and when the old man came to her, she asked him who they were.

"Ah!" he replied, "more refugees;—two gentlemen from Norwich, with excellent recommendations,—the elder, Dr. French, who wishes to inquire into our Dutch religious parties; and a young officer, Captain Drake, who wants to go to the armies on the Rhine. They will stay here for awhile. I have asked them to dine. Do you know them, *liebchen?*"

"I recognize their voices. If so, they are giving false names, and they will be far from welcome visitors to the English here."

"Now, *liebchen*, I wish I had waited, and not been so hospitable; but I seem to welcome anything in the shape of an Englishman. Wait!—they are leaving me for a time: will give them their *congé*. Do you look from this window, and make sure who they really are." Mijnheer Koop went to dismiss his friends; and Alice, looking forth, while carefully hiding herself, at once recognized the thick figure of quondam Dr. Green, and the slouching tallness of Stephen. When her old friend rejoined her, she stated her unwelcome discovery, and told him something of their former relations. Herr Koop assured her he would use his acquaintance in order to watch their doings. "But I have asked," said he, "my young friend Hans, and one or two more, to meet them, and cannot now draw back." As Alice returned home, she felt as if a cold shadow had fallen on all the happy life of Holland.

Meantime, the two men whose advent had caused this discomfort lounged away towards the Boompjees, not ill-pleased with their reception.

Wren exclaimed, "Not ill-planted, I think. That old fellow is the great friend of the Bridges: we shall hoodwink him capitally. The Dutch are all great owls."

Dr. Green laughed nervously. "I hope we may not be detected. I seem to see a spy in every corner. That old man was not so hearty when he returned: suppose his invitation were only a decoy?"

"Green——" answered Wren.

"Nay, you must say *French*, Stephen. Remember, if I am discovered, I may die in prison."

"Well, French, then," continued Stephen. "I well know you are condemned for bigamy—you, a clergyman! I shall never forget the scene as you were taking your present wife to dine at my father's palace with the clerical grandees. Madame Coligny appeared in full dress, slipped her arm through yours, pushed aside your poor baby-faced partner, and led you firmly to the reception-hall, where the names of guests were proclaimed. In vainly trying to shake off your Nemesis, some disturbance arose. 'What means this?' said the major-domo, coming up. 'Dr. Green, follow me, with your lady, in private.' There an *éclaircissement* took place, and you would have been doomed, but for my taking pity on you, and rescuing you from arrest."

"Well, but you also were expelled for false play, and you needed a companion in fresh adventures."

"You say right," answered Wren. "I mean to plunder some of these rich Dutchmen, and need an accomplice. Will you marry again with better fortune?"

"Not I," said Green; "anything but that. What we have on hand now is risky enough. Van Diense will smart for it if we succeed; but we must be very cautious—very cautious, Stephen, or matters may end worse."

Time passed, and Dr. French and Captain Drake still lingered in the city. They had gained access to some of the fast society at hotels and clubs, and many of the Dutch youth found their acquaintance a costly honor. Stephen ventured to call on the Bridges, and to explain his disguise, and assure them of his joy at their escape. This he represented as effected by his plan, which only miscarried by the treachery of the people he was obliged to employ. His reception was cold, yet they could not wholly forbid him, nor would he be shaken off, so that Alice had sometimes to endure his unacceptable presence. Dr. Green did not attempt any such measure, but one day poor Fanny rushed in with uncontrollable misery and excitement, crying out, "*He* is here! I have seen *him!* I only just got away!" After much soothing, the frightened girl was enabled to tell her tale. She had carried a parcel to the house of a poor woman, with whom she was talking, when a man entered the room behind her. She turned and recognized the Norwich Tutor—source of all her wretchedness. She was struck dumb, and could not escape. He seemed also amazed with the meeting, and begged her forgiveness. He said he had sorely repented of his conduct, and sorrowed over her sufferings. If she would only forgive, he would never trouble her again. What could she do, but forgive him on his repentance? Then he kissed her hand. She entreated him to go, or let her go; but he continued to talk about Norwich, her parents, and Gerhardt, to which she listened for awhile, still begging to be let go. Then he entreated her to make him an old friend, and meet him now and then in this strange place. Thinking he had gained enough, he moved aside a moment, and, like a pigeon cast loose, she fled away as fast as feet and breath would allow.

"Oh, oh!" she cried; "protect me!—I must never go out again!—I cannot resist him!—If Gerhardt should know!"

Alice communicated these facts to her valued friend Koop, who had his own reasons for watching closely this disagreeable pair. Very unpleasant rumors were traced to them, tending to set the Dutch and English against each other. They were generally thought to be deep

in debt, and suspected of issuing false bills. It was important to find some just cause for banishing these mischief-makers as soon as possible. "Let me only get a grain of real evidence against the rogues," said Herr Koop, "and it shall weigh as heavy as a ton."

The old magistrate's wish was gratified sooner and more fully than he expected. Some days after he had a mysterious visit from Gerhardt, who came from England, attended by two of his stout weavers. He said that forged bills on Van Diense's house to a considerable value had been issued by two fugitives from England's laws, on which they had already obtained certain advances, and which fell due in a short time. He wished to capture them if possible, or to prevent further payments on the bills. He asked aid from the worthy magistrate.

"Surely," said Koop with glee; "we know them here too well, and only need some legal cause for banishing them. You are welcome, and we will help you."

"Thank God!" gasped Gerhardt; "we are on the right track—we shall have them!"

"But we must be very wary," said the magistrate; "they are slippery as eels."

Then Mijnheer Koop gave Gerhardt the services of an experienced officer of justice, who knew Rotterdam well, and would aid them in their plans. This shrewd agent was informed of the whole circumstances, and suggested that the men should be tempted to walk out in the evening by the quay, where without noise they might be caught and shipped away for England to meet their deserts.

Then said the old magistrate, "I have some experience in these matters. I dare say woman's wit will help us to what we want."

The excellent magistrate found an occasion to consult Ann on the subject. On his explaining the object of seizing and removing the two disturbers, she was full of gladness, and on hearing the difficulties of the case, she at once declared, "Why should not Fanny and I walk out? They are sure to follow us. I can protect myself and Fanny too. I will persuade her to go with me. We will muffle up. I am quite ready to aid the arrest of such wretches, and to prevent them from robbing Van Diense or Gerhardt." The faithful girl rejoiced that Gerhardt had come over, and that in this way he and Fanny might be brought together again.

One evening at dusk, therefore, Ann and Fanny, warmly cloaked, proceeded by a road not much frequented by the quay side. The air was heavy and misty; the wind moaned through the overhanging trees, whose leaves fell rapidly, and swept along the pavement. All objects around had a weird and ghostly appearance. Even stout-hearted Ann felt her heart beat with trepidation at this unusual adventure; and Fanny, whose light form was driven by the gusty wind almost like the leaves, continually asked her companion, "What are we here for? I am frightened!—where are we going?—let us go back!" Then Ann told her they were doing an important service to Van Diense, and to her old friend Gerhardt. "Gerhardt!" said Fanny,—"anything for him; but will *he* come?"

"I don't know who will come," replied Ann, "but we must wait and see."

Now the clocks of the city were heard ringing forth the then late hour of seven, and Ann became additionally attentive for footsteps. None came, however; and minute by minute the two women loitered by themselves till the quarter struck, but no one appeared. "Now it is no use waiting longer," said Ann, while Fanny with some regret prepared for a rapid retreat, when two figures were discerned, black as the night, slowly approaching.

Ann met them boldly, and catching the larger figure by the cloak, shook and tore it open, as she said, "You are come at last! I have you fast, you villainous Tutor! You shall smart for it! Let me get at you!" She succeeded in pulling apart the Spanish cloak, but was amazed to find it was Mijnheer Koop whom she had thus abused, and who said, "Woman, I am glad I am not your real enemy. So the miscreants have not come?—Hans and I could not keep away." Just then Gerhardt and the Dutch officer, who had waited impatiently, and now imagined their opportunity was come, sprang from their concealment, and surrounded the whole party. This led to a scene of great confusion, each mistaking the other in the darkness. The women began to scream, and cries were heard, "Hold them fast,—no escape for the villains!" "Hands off, old sir!—who do you take me for?" "Come, you gamblers." "I never threw the dice in my life." "You fellows, don't be so rude." "Pfui schaamt ge u niet?? (Fie! are you not ashamed?)"

A bright idea now flashed on the Dutch officer that the two women might be their captives in disguise. This he hinted to Gerhardt, and at once seized on Ann, leaving the slighter form to be dealt with by Gerhardt. Ann resisted violently, when the officer said, "Come now, my fine fellow, your game is up; don't give us trouble. We know you as Dr. Green, the bigamist. You had better give in. Ik durf het onder mijn ambtseed berestigen (I assure you on mine office.)"

"Not I, indeed!" exclaimed Ann, slapping the poor officer's face severely, and indignant to be taken for the man she hated. "To take me for that scoundrel!—a lawful married woman to be taken for a bigamist and a fellow!"

While this vigorous scuffle was proceeding, Gerhardt had also captured his gentler prisoner. Fanny retreated from him under a wall, and then, removing her veil, stood gazing on him, speechless. It was not long ere he knew her, and cried out "Fanny!" while she replied, in plaintive tone, "Gerhardt!"

Fanny then approached, and took his reluctant hand, and said, "You may take me to prison or to death, Gerhardt; and I will do anything you wish. I have never loved any but you. Have you quite cast me off?"

He came nearer, and answered, "Fanny, what would you say if I have lost much property, and given up my old house? You would not like to be poor. 'Cling to a rich fool, but shun a lad who is poor.'"

"Gerhardt, believe me, whatever I was, I don't care now how poor you are,—only take me."

"Thank you, Fanny," said he kindly, touching her hand; "but suppose that I have promised my old sister that she shall always live with me, and manage my house?"

"That's harder," said Fanny; "but for your sake I will readily live with your sister, rather than turn her out."

"That's noble and wise, Fanny," said Gerhardt, as he passed his arm round her waist; "but what if I have grown hard and selfish of late? I may be cross, and expect you to do all I choose to fancy. 'Men rule and woman bear,' you know."

"Yes," sobbed Fanny. "I used to be very, very selfish: you would have had a poor wife in me before; but I have been humbled, and taught to have no will of my own."

Gerhardt was now greatly moved, and regarded her proudly while he said, "Fanny, when I came over here, I thought just to see you, and I said to myself, 'Fallen fruit is better than none;' and when I knew I should meet you to-night, I said again, 'Try a coat before you take it.' I have been proving you, and you have come out gloriously. We are more fit to make each other happy than in former days: 'Time and trouble polish double.' Now let me tell you the truth, dearest. I have never altered to you, but love you best to-night; I am not really poorer, but richer than before; I have made no promise to my sister; and I don't know that I am harder or crosser than I was; at all events, I will try to make you happy."

So the reconciliation was complete. The criminals were not entrapped, for somehow they had found out the trick, and absconded; but they never showed face again in Rotterdam, and they lost their expected profits from the forged bills. Gerhardt, however, was well content with the night's work: for, as he said, he "thought to snare a hawk, but caught a dove instead."

To the delight of many there was a happy wedding at the Haringvleet church, conducted in right Puritan style, between a born Dutchman and an Englishwoman. We may say here that this married pair fulfilled the good promises with which they started. Gerhardt found his consequence increased in Norwich by marrying the daughter of "Old Reason Why." Several pretty children blessed their union, and Gerhardt proved an excellent husband and father,—many of his queer angularities being rubbed off. Fanny regained much of her old spirit, without losing that sweet humbleness she had learned in trouble. Gerhardt, looking fondly at her brisk, graceful motions, would say, "Skittish colts make willing horses."

CHAPTER XXXII.

MORE LIGHT AND TRUTH.

"Die Welt ist rund! Ein leichtes Wort,
Und doch ein Wort von tiefem Sinn,
Durch alle Welten zieht es fort,
Nach Rundung drangt sich alles hin
Es formt sich alles, lind und leis,
Nach ewigem Gesetz zum Preis."

SCHLOENBACH.

THE visit of the good Dutchman, Mijnheer Koop, to the Rector, and his evident attachment to his adopted daughter, Alice, had led to further intimacy, and to interesting colloquies in the Minister's study on religious and ecclesiastical matters. These conversational meetings were often joined by the Fleming, as well as by the worthy John Allen, who still clung tenaciously to the views habitual to a Protestant English clergyman. Sometimes the ladies would be present, but rarely interposing a remark or a question.

Such a conference was being held one fine summer's evening in an arbor, looking out on a trim Dutch garden of bulbous plants, in bright beds, hedged by espalier fruit-trees. Distant sounds from the quay, of creaking ropes, shouting crews, and rattling wheels, came to their ears in softened echoes. Pleasant scents of flowers were borne on the breeze. Overhead a cloudless sky, and a sun glowing with slanting rays out of the warm west, lent a glory to the landscape.

Mijnheer Koop broke the meditative silence of the group by remarking, "That was a noble but somewhat startling word of advice uttered by your great pastor Robinson, whom I once heard deliver a grand lecture at Leyden,—when addressing some of his flock who were migrating to the New World. He said, '*Remember that there is yet more light and truth to break forth from God's word.*' This is very contrary to the finality of the Church of Rome, which holds to the theology of the fathers and early councils as the universal standard for all generations. 'More light and truth from God's word.' I hope so! Ik ben van dezelfde opinie (I am of the same opinion)."

"Yet," remarked the Fleming, "there has been no greater innovator than the Romish Church, with her sacraments and celibacy, her saint and Mary worship, her purgatory, and numerous Church offices, and the almost God-like infallibility attributed to the Pope. But her errors certainly never 'broke forth from the word of God,' nor can be owned as 'light and truth.'"

"I fear," said Allen, "I cannot join in your admiration of Robinson's words. They seem to me dangerous encouragements to sectarian novelties and divisions, of which Protestantism is chargeable with but too many already. Surely, the ancient Creeds and Articles of the Churches contain whatever 'light and truth' in religion we are to expect."

"Observe," was Bridge's reply, "Robinson added to the admirable advice quoted by our Dutch friend words such as these: 'Be careful that the fresh light you receive from the word of God shall accord with the other contents of that book diligently studied and compared;' which practice would prevent the evils my brother Allen dreads. Then consider that Robinson holds to the 'word of God' as a complete revelation of God's will. But it may be asked, Do we correctly or fully understand that word; or is the measure and form of our interpretation that which will serve for other ages? Already, great has been the change from the almost childish comments of the early fathers to the exegesis of an Origen, the practical fullness of a Chrysostom, the severe strictness of Augustine, and the monastic Romanism of Bernard. What a change from all these to the freedom and fresh investigations of the Reformation! And are we not even already learning to modify and correct some conclusions drawn by Luther and Calvin out of Holy Writ? I declare, since I have set aside the Creeds and Articles, by which my vows had formerly bound my interpretation and come to the Scripture afresh, I have found not a little new truth, and also striking modifications of previous ideas. My first overwhelming experience related, as you are aware, to the form of the Church—its officers, worship, and organization,—regarding all of which my views and practices have been wholly revolutionized. On these matters you already know my views full well,—though they will appear very heretical in England."

The conversation now took a wider range than we can follow in detail. After fuller reference to the great change in the clergyman's views respecting the constitution and discipline of the Christian Church, *Calvinism* and *Arminianism* were discussed, and blended as two halves of one whole, with reprobation of the then hard prejudices mutually cherished between the parties. The *inspiration* of the word of God was handled also in the sense that, as Christ had two natures, Divine and human, so has the written revelation its human and Divine character; and while it contains a precious Divine essence, it also partakes of the limited conceptions of its human writers. The subject of the monkish terrors of *future punishments*, and of eternal fire and brimstone, was solemnly and tenderly treated, and the spiritual dignity and large hopes of Scripture on these subjects were thankfully admitted. The severe usage dealt out to former *so-called heretics* was lamented and denounced; on which subject the Rector said, "I have learnt much valuable truth from those whom the Church has banned as heretics, and I believe they were often pioneers of truth. The Arians were not wholly wrong, still less the Novatians and Paulicians. The Waldenses were the precursors of reformation, while Wycliffe and Luther were denounced as heretics by the old Church. The modern Arminians, and even the Socinians, as well as Quakers, have offered useful protests against the extremes and the dogmatism of orthodoxy. It may fall to my lot to be unwillingly a heresiarch, and seemingly a schismatic, when I get home, and to help in leading a new form of Church order and Christian sentiment. Still I ever implore those who follow me, eagerly to look for and embrace any future opportunity for returning to unity, when liberty is allowed and reformation effected. I feel it had been well if, instead of cursing every new light, Christians had been more ready to accept the good from every quarter. We should have advanced further had this principle guided the enlightened leaders of the Church, instead of the opposite—that of crushing all who presumed to vary an iota from established doctrines."

"May the Christian Church be wiser hereafter!" said the Fleming. "I would like to see a Church history which did justice to these so-called heretics, many of whom suffered and died at least for half-truths, and others of them were more really Christian than their oppressors. Even our Protestant *Magdeburg Centuries*—our best present ecclesiastical chronicle—is far from removing the reproach under which previous Reformers labored, for they continue to regard Henri of Lausanne, Peter Valdo, and the Cathari as heretics justly censured by the Church."

Just at this part of the dialogue the door opened, and Alice and the Lady Gabrielle came in from a visit to their homes, looking rather sad and jaded.

"Why, *liebchen*, what is the matter?" exclaimed the kind old Dutchman, Mijnheer Koop. "Has the cook been in a fiery temper, or have the doctor and old nurse quarreled? Wat hebt ge een haast? (Why in such haste?)"

"No, mijnheer," answered Gabrielle; "worse than all these together;—a sort of religious mutiny has arisen."

"Ah, my lady, then the Jewess and the Unitarian women have broken the peace and cursed each other again;—zeer warm! zeer warm!"

"That is not all," explained Alice. "You know Dame Stuyvesant?"

"What, the Arminian whom my pastor excommunicated? Zeer wel, mejufvrouw (very well, fraulein)."

"Yes, mijnheer, all these poor women are excommunicated by the Churches of the city; and when they came to us, they had a bitter spirit against Christians, and wrangled with each other. The two Christians attacked the Jewess as a murderer of Christ; and she retorted on them as idolaters who blasphemed the one God; while the Arminian assailed the Unitarian as a dishonorer of her Divine Lord; and the Unitarian reproached them all, in her turn for superstition."

"As pretty a result of our stiff theological systems, gentlemen," said Mijnheer Koop, "as our former discussions could have forecast. We surely need a new theology. Stilte! Is het mogelijk? (Hush! Is it possible?)"

"You know, however," continued Alice, "how by patience we brought about peace; and at last these very women had become the most useful helpers in our work—the very salt of the house."

"Yes," said Mijnheer Koop; "I know how wisely you ladies dealt with them. You showed the Jewess that she was not answerable for the crime of her ancestors, nor wrong in condemning the sort of Christianity she had seen in the Roman Church. You showed the Unitarian that jealousy for God's honor was commendable, but that she should think as highly as possible of Jesus the great Saviour. Thus you softened and reconciled them, and they drew together in true friendship. De friesche lucht geeft eetlust (fresh air gives appetite)."

"Ah, but all that has been destroyed by a visit paid by Dr. Teuchner yesterday. He spoke kindly to the other inmates, but singled out these three for severe rebukes. 'You three,' said he, 'are outlaws from the Christian commonwealth; you ought not to be here, defying as you do all the essentials of religion. You are deniers of God, adversaries of the Saviour, allies of the devil. Unworthy creatures, you are an abomination to a holy God!' They were struck dumb at first by the harsh words of the *dominé*; but, presently, the Jewess told him he was a foul slanderer, for she honored God as much as he did; and the other women followed suit, with, I regret to say, much angry recrimination. Among other things, they told him to watch his own flock, who sinned that grace might abound; and the Unitarian declared his evil spirits to be all hideous phantoms, more worthy of some savage idolatry than the religion of a God of Love. You may imagine the Doctor's indignation, and the hubbub which ensued. He left the scene threatening to indict the Homes before the Raad, which I believe he will do. The women resolved to quit the house, and not endure such treatment an hour longer. They were persuaded, however, to remain till we arrived. Such was the state of things we found this morning."

"Very sad, *liebchen*, but we shall stand by you at the Raad, and old Dr. Teuchner is well known for his hard bigotry. We shall beat him, op mijn woord (on my word)."

"We have, however, prevailed with the women to humble themselves, and express in writing their sorrow for intemperate words, and their resolution to hear respectfully the Doctor another time."

"Well done, *liebchen!* And how did you compass that?"

"Well, we showed the Jewess, from her own Bible, how Abram overcame Lot by concession, and how Gideon's soft answer turned away wrath, and how Abigail appeased David's anger. All at once she said, 'Verily, you understand our own books better than we do. I almost think your teacher must be the Messiah.' The other two we also showed that, professing a form of Christianity which they thought purer than others, their conduct should be more guarded and more charitable."

"Why," said Mijnheer Koop, "even the tough old Doctor cannot stand this. He will go with me to see them, and he will bless them against himself—that he will. Ik geef u mijn woord (I give you my word)."

Bridge expressed his great satisfaction with what the ladies had done, and added, "I see from this fact what has appeared to me in the New Testament also—that women must have a larger place in the future Church than in the past. They were prophets and deaconesses and helps in the early Church. The Quakers, I hear, allow them to prophesy in the Church, which I am not sure Paul meant wholly to forbid."

"No doubt," said the Fleming, "women would bring into the Church-work more of passion, delicacy, and forbearance, and into doctrine a sense of the living personality of the Saviour, like that of the Magdalen, which would soften the logical hardness of men's creeds. They would be the best instructors and molders of tender youth; they would best lead ministries of charity; they would win, instead of threatening, the perverse and disputative."

Said the Fleming, "I met yesterday with a sort of parable, in a noble English book on the 'Iniquity of Persecution,' as follows: 'Abram sat in his tent door, waiting for strangers, when an aged man, a hundred years old, came by, leaning on his staff. He asked him in, washed his feet, kindly served him; but the old man asked no blessing on his meal, and, when questioned, he confessed that he was a heathen and a fire-worshiper. Then Abram rose in anger, and thrust him out in the dark and dangerous evening. When he was gone, God came and said to Abram, "I have endured that man's heathenism these hundred years, and couldst thou not bear with him a single night?" So Abram arose and fetched him in again, and gave him hospitality and wise instruction. Go thou and do likewise.'" All approved this beautiful illustration of the Christian spirit from the eloquent pages of Jeremy Taylor, an Episcopalian divine of rare promise.

Then Mijnheer Koop observed, "Our conversation, and this practical incident at its close, both seem to bring us back to the admirable words of your Robinson, 'Remember, there is still *more light and truth to break forth from God's word.*' Dat is zeer wonderbaar (that is very wonderful)."

Bridge rejoined: "I once knew a noble-hearted Dutch pastor whose heart was stronger than his head, and who had been trained in the narrow creed of the Antinomians, which allowed only the hope of salvation for a small remnant of the elect out of the doomed multitude of the world. This good man heard with surprise and interest of the efforts making and the success attained by the Puritan exiles in America to save the native Indians, when in an unguarded impulse of feeling he uttered the inconsistent exclamation, 'Would that God would elect the whole world to everlasting life!' His prayers were wider than his creed."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

HOME IN PERIL AND SORROW.

"O kehr' zuruck! O kehr' zuruck!
Du meines Tages Sonnenschien
Mein Tag beginnt mit deinem Blick
O kehr' zuruck! O kehr' zuruck!
Und lass mich nicht in Nacht allein."

JAGER.

THE state of things in England was at this time unsettled, and the King had returned to his arbitrary courses. War was again declared with the Scots, who had come over the Border under old Leslie, who was trained in the Swedish camp. A battle was imminent, as Charles, at the head of some train-bands and Irish troops, hastily gathered, had advanced to meet them.

The more prominent exiles in Holland now resolved that the time had come to think of their return, and some had already crossed the sea. The still extant book of Church minutes kept in Norwich declares that "after tidings of a Parliament called and convened in England was reported to the saide Church at Rotterdam, diverse of the saide Church whose hearts God moved to endeavor the furthering the light they now saw in their native country by all lawful means (not without hope of enjoying freedom there), after much advising and seeking God for direction, returned into England with the assent, prayers, and approbation of the Church."

Alice was one morning hastening along the Boompjees when she noticed some bustle created by the arrival of an English vessel. As she was pursuing her walk, a burly English sailor, with full brown beard and broad felt cap, crossed her path. She stopped to ask, "Was he from Yarmouth?" When he turned to reply, she was delighted to recognize George. His news, however, saddened them both. Edward had been severely attacked by brain fever, and George had come over for Alice to nurse him. Alice declared her readiness, with her parents' consent; and George said, "If your parents allow, I will see you and the Barnards safe to our house, where you will be of the greatest service. Poor Edward is very shattered, but I hope he will win through. I must sail at midnight. Let us meet here. Till then, farewell." He strode away, looking back once or twice at Alice's retreating figure.

Late that night, three figures—a man and two women—were seen quietly advancing along the quay, under cover of a murky night. They were dressed in Dutch costumes of a lady and two inferiors, but they talked in very clear English. "What a hideous figure this dress makes one!" said Ann Barnard. "I am like three cheeses one on the other—a large one at bottom, a smaller one to my shoulders, and a little round Dutch cheese at the top for this mob-cap."

"Never mind," said Alice,—"speak low."

"You may be easy, for any dress suits you; and I declare Master George will think you never were so lovely as in these roundabouts."

The sailor already described came forward, and led the little party on board the English vessel *Neptune*, laden with Dutch goods for Yarmouth. The women retired to their berth, as the ship rolled and pitched with the increasing swell. A strong north-west gale contended

with the westerly course of the voyage, and drove them down the Channel and toward the French coast.

After a stormy night, morning dawned clearer and quieter. "A sail" was now observed on the horizon in the direction of the French coast, and it became an anxious matter to ascertain what colors she bore. Just then, the supremacy which the English navy had shown in defeating the Spanish Armada had made the Dutch jealous, as well as the French. The Dutch lawyer Grotius put forth his work *Liberum mare* as a plea for freedom of the Channel, which Selden replied to, for England, in his *Mare Clausum*. Arguments led to blows, and English vessels incurred peril of capture, specially from French cruisers. It was therefore with real concern that the approaching vessel, in the growing light of morning, was made out to be a French war vessel bearing down rapidly. It was resolved that their vessel should hoist Dutch colors, and put on the appearance of an ally of France. The name of their vessel—*Neptune*—need not betray them. The log was cut out, and a portion of it copied afresh in Dutch. The English captain gave place to a Dutch sailor who knew no French. All was cleverly arranged as the French vessel came nearer and nearer. Soon a flash and puff was seen—a ball whizzed over their heads, damaging their sails, and hinting to them that it was necessary to obey this formidable challenge. The vessels were soon as near as they dared be in so rough a sea. A boat was manned with difficulty, and after laboring with the waves awhile, an officer, dripping with surf, climbed the side of the *Neptune* and called in French for the captain. George smiled on hearing the officer expressing his angry disappointment. "Dutch, after all our trouble!—a trading fishing ally! Why, 'tis English build!—yet they look like stupid Hollanders." Then he sulkily made his way to the cabin, looked for the ship's books, made out her name and particulars,—all made ready for him in excellent Dutch.

"Women on board!—I must see them. They may speak French, or tell me the truth,—though certainly the Dutch *vrouws* are not very attractive!" said the gallant Frenchman.

Alice and Ann soon entered, talking Dutch. The little Frenchman rose and bowed with the air of a dancing-master whose duty it was to teach all the world politeness; then, staring at their unexpected comeliness, said aloud, "I declare these are no Dutch women;—why, they are charming—too charming!" Drawing nearer to Alice, who shrank from his freedom, he asked if she did not speak French, to which she did not reply. Then turning towards Ann, who looked boldly at him, he said, "If you do not understand French, there is a language you will understand." He proceeded to pat her under the chin, and to offer her a French salute, when she as decidedly gave him a sound English box-on-the-ears. Forgetting herself in her displeasure, Ann exclaimed, "You French monkey! is that the way you treat women?" while Will, coming between them, and extending his fists, cried, "Come on then!—and let her alone."

Here was a critical position of things! The officer laughed, saying, "English after all, as I thought!—prudes and viragos!" William and Ann drew back, and looked ashamed of their simplicity.

"I pronounce this ship captured for my Government, and shall take you all into Havre port for trial. There you will repent your English insolence," said the Frenchman.

At this moment, Alice, regaining courage, addressed the officer in French, and owned that she and one or two others on board were English refugees who had taken ship for home, and that she was bound to the sick-bed of a dear friend, on which account she prayed the gallant captain not to detain them, nor to allow the sailors to suffer for their sakes. This seemed so likely to the Frenchman, that, listening to the entreaties of his men, who feared the fresh outburst of the storm, and conciliated by a cask of Hollands which was lowered into his boat, he condescended to follow, and to retire. After some hours of labor, they neared Yarmouth, and saw the tower of old St. Nicholas church before them. They lost no time, after a night's rest, in getting aboard a wherry in the Wensum, by which they quanted or sailed to the old city. On the way, George and Alice sat on the upper deck chatting freely together, and watching the landscape change, and the cathedral and the castle come nearer and nearer.

"Alie, when we get home, on which side shall you stand?" said George.

"Oh, George, I dread rebellion in State, and schism in Church; and once I should have been stanch to the Court. But I have learnt something from exile. I have seen the happy liberty and social honor of Dutch republicanism. A new world has opened on me which I would sooner see transferred to England than go back to the old world."

"Alie, you speak my thoughts,—how glad I am you feel so! Shall we not help to renew dear old England?"

"But, George, when I think that the change involves the murderous assault of Englishmen on those of their own blood, I shudder, and am ready to leave things as they are."

"But," said George, "that we cannot do, for the other party is bent on pushing matters to extremes. They will abolish Parliaments, and all civic rule, and make the King absolute. Are we to be driven back to the state in which the Dutch were under Spain? or were it not better and holier for us to suffer, strive, and die, to prevent such a yoke for ourselves and our children?"

"Yes, George. I seem to remember the stories my good father Koop used to tell me of his youth. I fear we must follow his example. May God prosper the champions of liberty and truth!"

"Hurrah, dear Alie!" said George; "now indeed we are agreed on that great vital question of our lifetime, without which, in such an age, mere personal preferences might prove slight ties. Now my heart is yours without reserve."

In the large withdrawing-room of the house in Tombland belonging to the Sherwoods sat three ladies—the lady of the house, Alice, and May Hope.

"You really think him better to-day?" said Alice.

"Certainly; unless you mean to dispute my father's skill, and set up for a better doctor as well as nurse," rejoined May with some sharpness."

"My dear," remarked Dame Sherwood, "your father is a very fine doctor, but what would he do without the kitchen? That warm ragout which I made for Edward might have given an appetite even to a skeleton. No wonder he is better. And now I must go and see to his jellies and broths."

"He did not eat a cupful, however," said May.

"It was provoking," rejoined the good lady as she departed, "that the Bishop should have come last night, as he will have the credit of a miracle."

"And then," continued May, laughing, "to see the little Bishop, with his affected dignity and embroidered vestures! It took all the sanctity away, in my eyes."

"Yet Edward received it with comfort," threw in Alice, who added, after a short pause, "You must have had a terrible time here, May."

"Ah yes, Alice!—you come in when it is passing by."

"I came, May, because I feared not to see him again, and that I might be some comfort to you all."

"Yes; but, Alice, he did want you, and you have always been his chief adviser; when we were children he would say, 'Go and laugh with George, but leave Alice and me.'"

"But since then we have been apart," said Alice.

"You have written pretty frequently," answered her friend, keenly observing her.

"Very true, but we have agreed less and less."

"Still he leans on you, Alice, and often in his weakness he has said, 'If Alice were here!' Then George resolved to fetch you; and you see he is better."

"I am glad I came at a favorable time. But tell me, what have been his moods and wanderings?"

"O Alice, it has been a wonderful watching; he has lain for hours motionless, and we thought he was gone. But in all his ravings his words have ever been noble, calling on God to save the King and the Church,-or repeating the offices of the Church. The devotion of his parishioners, rich and poor, is great;—daily prayer has been offered for him; the holy communion is brought each morning by a curate. The Bishop's visit shows how strong a hold his work has taken on the City. He has not labored in vain. All his income is given in charity. No soldier could yield his life to privation and peril more boldly than Edward has done. I am of another school, but I cannot help approving, where, perhaps, you may only condemn."

"Far from it, May. You will admit that I was the first to sympathize with Edward: hence, no doubt, he gave me his confidence; but you used to check his zeal."

"No doubt I did while he was well, Alice; and probably should do so again if he recovered. But during this illness I have been amazed to witness the force of his religious work over all sorts of characters. I have seen him in another aspect, and been softened."

Here she paused as if overcome, when Alice came near, and wound her arm round her, while she whispered, "He loves you, May! and you find now that you too——"

"Alice, stay!—it is not so;—you are the favored one. He sends for you after we have all been bending at his feet. Yet could I not advise you to indulge——his heart is for no human passion. My friend, we need to rule ourselves."

Alice, almost unable to speak, warmly kissed her friend, and with difficulty replied, "Dearest, we need not be jealous. I thought George had told you about our betrothal. I am nothing to Edward but his faithful sister."

"Thanks to God, and to you," May exclaimed with a deep sigh, "for this relief. I can say no more. I hear my father leaving—I will go with him. Excuse me for a time."

They parted with a hasty but cordial embrace, and Alice passed into the sick chamber, where she heard Dame Sherwood saying, "Now, my bonny Ned, see!—here is some of mother's best jelly. Look at the color!"

"Mother," said the patient, "I feel as if the Bishop's visit last evening had made a new man of me. There is no cure like God's care."

"Very true, my boy. I thank the blessed men—only they ate up all I had in the house, and they nearly ruined your father in fees. The visit will cost a hundred pounds at least,—Bishop, half; clergy, twenty pounds; and fees for clerks, choristers, wax candles, incense, holy water, and washing vessels and cloths,—all duly charged. And all that for 'a brother clergyman,' on which account the chaplain said it was 'as reasonable as possible.'"

At this unwise recital of facts, Edward fell back on his pillow, seemingly overwhelmed, and muttered, "O God! these are the spots on our feasts—things that make the enemy to blaspheme. They disenchant the glorious services; they are Satan's trail on the Paradise of worship; they take away the spell which I was feeling of medicinal virtue from the hem of the Lord's garment; they wound my very soul, so that 'it refuseth dainty meat.'"

"Nay, dear Ned, you will not refuse your mother's own dishes. These shall be the spell, the medicine which shall cure you, my boy. Now take this jelly."

He raised himself languidly, and obeyed, saying, "Mother, your love helps to cure me."

As Alice drew near, after the mother left, Edward said, "Come, Alice, tell me some of your observations in Holland. I too have learned something in the school of sickness."

So she quietly talked to him of the first Sabbath at Rotterdam, the simple worship they found there, how doubtful they were of joining it, and of the great peace, love, and profit they had all enjoyed. Then she told her story of the Homes, and of her good friend Koop, and of Gabrielle's coming, and their encouraging success.

"You speak of singing hymns," said Edward; "will you please me by giving some now?"

Then Alice, with her sweet tone, sang some of the hymns she had been used to give to her orphans—about Jesus, and the better land. Edward, whose sensibilities to music and piety were most keen, lay back with his eyes closed and a delighted smile on his face; thanking her for lifting him above life and self.

May appearing rather shy to offer her congratulations, unhappily said, "The Bishop appeared at the right time, though his *misereres* and extreme unctions have proved out of place."

"Ah, May, my friend, you always flout these things," said Edward; "your cool wisdom damps my zeal;" and a little trouble arose among them.

Alice quickly rejoined, "All bishops are not Wrens, I am glad to say. I am sure, Edward, he is not to your taste."

A little further chat took place, but it was evident, with all her admiration for him, May could not conceal her repugnance to his strict ideas, nor could control her propensity to see the ridiculous side of them, which made him wince, and created a distance between them.

The procession from the church with the communion was now announced; and before the clergy entered, Edward said to his friends, "You will remain and join with us?"

Alice assented; but May said, "Thank you, I must go; there is a little too much of saint-worship in it for me; though, Edward, I believe you are as real a saint as any on the roll!"—and so she departed.

Alice found May, when the service was over, in one of the lower rooms shedding bitter tears. "Why, why could not I remain? Why must I always scoff at what he reveres? I went in resolved to be so good—to say nothing naughty, but it would come out. Oh, Alice, what can I do?"

Alice comforted her friend, and then went away with her to dine with her father. May had soon shaken off her melancholy fit, and was brilliant in her sallies.

The Doctor said, as they sat down to table, "Well, girls, have you worried my handsome clerical patient and undone all my cures? How is the youth?"

"I am astonished at his improvement, Doctor," replied Alice; "but you always did wonders."

"Nonsense," cried mirthful May. "Father, you will get no credit from him;—his mother lays the cure to her cookery; the Bishop, to his holy prayers; his parish, to their daily visits; and Alice here slily accounts for it by her return! If I were you, I would send in my little bill before the clergy strip the house."

"Aye," rejoined the Doctor, "that is a hint worth considering. Let alone the Bishop's visit, these curates and choristers will have a pretty sum."

"What, from his own parish?" asked Alice. "I cannot imagine such a thing."

"Surely: I was at the door," said Dr. Hope, "as they left yesterday, and saw Sherwood's steward pay them all. But see here, girls!" exclaimed the Doctor, looking at a dispatch which his man brought in,—"here is a letter from Colonel George."

Mischievous May winked hard at Alice, who eagerly replied, "Pray do, and please give us any news."

"News, indeed," shouted the Doctor, flourishing his fork with perilous energy. "News!—why, 'the Scots have beaten the King, who is making peace, and returning to London to call a Parliament.' The Colonel begs me to tell Edward and his fair nurses that he will be here soon. And what is this?—here, Alice, read it to yourself. So, my girl, I give you joy;—you have possession of one of the noblest hearts in England."

Alice blushed becomingly, but was silent.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

CROMWELL AT HUNTINGDON.

"Your private life did a just pattern give
How fathers, husbands, pious sons should live.
Born to command, your princely virtues slept,
Like humble David's while his flock he kept;
But when your troubled country called you forth,
Your flaming courage and your matchless worth,
Dazzling the eyes of all that did pretend
To fierce contention, gave a prosp'rous end."
WALLER.

THE Member for Huntingdon, a portly, well-proportioned man, with piercing eye and quick manner, was walking in his well-kept bowling-green, surrounded by orchard trees in full blossom, stretching down to the gentle river Ouse, on which the summer sun shone bright. With him were two of his most favorite friends—his doctor, Simcott, who had often checked the strong mental agitations which shook even that powerful frame; and his chaplain, Dr. Wells, of St. Ives, a lecturer of eminent usefulness. These companions were, Cromwell wrote, "Not short of any I know in England." Cromwell had been attending to the affairs of his large farm, his lands bringing in what would now about equal a thousand pounds a year. His paternal house was a fine old mansion on the outskirts of Huntingdon. His uncle, Sir Oliver, lived a few miles off, on the Ouse, at Hinchinbrook, a princely place.

Oliver Cromwell was descended from Cromwell the Chancellor in Henry the Eighth's reign, and was connected with Hampden and many leading families. Living as a country squire in opulence, with a beloved wife and several children, he was at first a man of the world, till by Dr. Wells and others he was led to consider religion seriously. His trouble of heart was great, but at length faith entered his anxious soul, and he became a thorough Christian. This brought him into alliance with the Puritan party. His piety soon led to practical fruits; while, as Milton said, "he grew up in peace and privacy at home, silently cherishing in his heart a confidence in God, and a magnanimity well adapted to the solemn times that were approaching."

"Doctor," said he to Simcott, a man of ripe years and of frank, merry look, as they stood together with the polished bowls in their hands waiting for parson Wells to take his careful aim and deliver his biassed bowl in the right curve,—"you will scold me again. My night has been sore troubled, for I read about Zacchæus before I went to rest. The Lord was pleased to remind me of the times when I used to gamble for recreation with young friends, and of two sums specially which I won—eighty pounds from Huett of St. Ives, and a hundred and twenty from the son of the Master of my college at Cambridge. Now, ought I to return these sums, the evil plunder of gambling? What say you, my good friends?"

Said the Doctor with a laugh, as he rolled off his ball toward the yellow jack some yards away, "Verily, friend, your conscience grows very expensive and exacting. Already I know what large sums you have surrendered. Could your note collect somewhat you owe to me? Pray, what supper did you eat last night? Did you win these moneys by cheating or in fair play?"

Cromwell having won the game, as he threw the jack for a new encounter from the other side of the lawn, replied, "The play was fair enough for a sport that is wholly foul. I had naught for supper last even but pork chops and a good Norfolk dumpling. I can ill afford the money, yet I am ill at ease in keeping it."

"Friend and brother," said the chaplain, whose nervous arm had just cast a stroke which hit the jack and carried it away from all competitors, "sometimes, you see, a ball delivered right heartily and straight forward settles the question and wins the game. The voice of conscience is such a ball, and must be listened to, because it is borne out by Scripture; and we must cut off the right hand or lose the right eye rather than cloak sin. You are right, and will be easier and stronger for this straightforward sacrifice. Yet be not troubled, for Christ hath answered for your sins. Perhaps your restitution may touch the conscience of others, as my bowl has hit the jack and scattered the field."

"I fear not," said Cromwell, sending his ball by a long sweep right after Wells, and cutting in between the jack and him; "the youths will stare, and pocket the money readily, and call me an idiot for my pains. Yet I cannot be anything half and half. But, see, my wife and daughters are coming this way. Let us meet them."

In the distance were seen a pretty group—a young and pleasing-looking mother, with three girls frolicking around and pulling her along. She was a perfect lady, daughter of Sir James Bouchier. The wife was not so grave a Puritan as her husband, though truly good. Her girls, Bridget, Elizabeth, and Mary, were fine handsome children, full of life. There were also three elder brothers, Oliver, Richard, and Henry, not at home, and a baby, Frances, in the nursery.

Cromwell hastened to meet his wife with all the eagerness which, though he had been so long married, showed the devoted husband and father. "My dearest life, you are out soon, and the dew is hardly off the grass. And you, sweethearts, what are you teazing your mother for?"

"Oh, dear father," replied Elizabeth, who seemed rather the favorite, "we all want—and so does mother too—that you will drive us to St. Ives, and come back in the new carriage on springs, and with glass sides."

"Yes," chimed in Bridget, "our neighbors the Plummers have a carriage much smarter than ours; but one with glass sides, and springs, will take the shine out of them."

"Father," was Mary's gentler word, "you are a member of Parliament and an officer, and your family should ride out with the best. When we go to Hinchinbrook with our spring cart and farm horses, we look so shabby among the gentry; but our blood is as good as theirs, and our father is the greatest man in all the shire."

"Oliver dearest," said his wife, "I thought Roger could drive us in the spring cart, and you ride on horseback, and we all return together. But if you have pressing business, shall we go?—only we lose your company."

"But, dear heart, what if I cannot buy the new carriage just now? Wife, I'll tell you my trouble. You know I dreamed and lay awake?"

"Assuredly I do; but I did not ask you the cause, for Dr. Simcott tells me it is ill for you to pore over these fancies. He says you want work to employ your energies, and then these things will be forgotten."

"Hey, good Doctor, this is how you interfere with my marital sway! I must have you tried for conspiracy against your old friend."

The Doctor decisively answered, "Then I decline to be answerable for the fluctuations of health of a patient so sensitive and unruly, unless I can turn to account the powerful sedatives of home. You would sometimes be half-crazy without these medicines."

"You best know how little jealous I am on this score, my trusted adviser. But at present, faithful wife, I am reminded of old gambling debts which I feel I ought to repay, and that will take up my present cash, about two hundred pounds. Girls, you would not like your father to feel dishonored?"

"Our father never will be that," said Bridget. "So, mother, we must wait for the new carriage."

"But, my daughters, I will not balk you. You shall drive to St. Ives, and I will ride over after you as soon as my work is done. You are dear, good creatures. Was ever man so happy in his home? Let it be as you say, and I will obey the Lord's will, and pay the debts forthwith."

"In so doing," observed the worthy divine, "you will set an example to our Israel which will quicken the pulse of conscience, and make religion respected and fruitful."

"Better so," added the Doctor, "than fall sick and want my physic. Many a man would buy health and ease of mind cheap at two hundred pounds. Farewell, for I must go my rounds."

"I also must say farewell, having my sick to visit," said Dr. Wells.

"May you both do much good to mind and body by Divine grace," said Cromwell in grave tones; "you have done me good, for I was working into a fever, and unfit for any effort, by reason of the fast hold of these past offenses on my memory."

As his wife and girls drove off, Cromwell's face assumed a stern gravity, and looking upward he said, "O Lord, how soon must I turn to sterner work!—how gladly would I abide in this rural scene with 'my children about me!' but the summons is perhaps on the way calling me to a traitor's prison, or to bloody fields of battle; yet the Lord gives me great confidence that I am raised up to vanquish the foes of truth, and to aid in founding a new and better England. Lord, 'I am most ready to honor Thee either by doing or suffering.'"

Cromwell now entered the house, and at his desk wrote two letters inclosing orders to the amount mentioned, with his serious advice concerning all such evil practices.

Then he wrote to his sons Richard and Henry, while his broad face changed from mood to mood of merriment, seriousness, or genial love, as his pen expressed these natural feelings with the greatest force and freedom. Once he laid down the pen, and laughed aloud. "Oh, boys!" said he, "none but you could beguile your anxious father into such mirth—blessings be upon you! So Henry was ready to fight with a sprig of nobility who called his father a brewer, and placed a jug of beer under his nose; but when the fellow saw a sword half-drawn, he turned tail and ran away, with Henry after him, cooling his courage by dashing all the beer over him from head to foot, and crying, 'Better be a brewer than a soaker!' Well done, Henry!—well done! But, my boys, I fear the brewer will draw you into a peck of troubles, and make you but a sour brewst."

He read carefully a letter in cypher from Kimbolton, his superior in the Eastern Counties, stating that a military summons had come from the King to muster the train-bands, and follow him to fight the Scots. "We must call a muster," wrote Kimbolton, "and make some

advance. Pray see to this; unless some news come of a Scotch victory,—then Parliament must be called."

"Aye, aye!" muttered Cromwell; "I wish such news would come, and come quick. If it does not, we shall have to hide, or be sent to the Tower. 'Tis a critical moment;—the Lord send swift deliverance!"

Cromwell was on the point of mounting his horse to follow his wife, when he was told that a sailor wished to speak with him. A man covered with dust of travel, who had just ridden up in haste, entered his study, and, having shut the door, said, "Cromwell, a glass of wine, or I faint! I have most important dispatches! But I can stand no more." He sank on a chair exhausted, when Cromwell most tenderly used every means to revive his strength, calling him "George, my friend, my brother, take this!—rouse a little!" In a short time Colonel George Sherwood—for it was he thus disguised—was in a condition to make his report.

"Now, George," said Cromwell, seating himself in eager attention, "let me know the Lord's will, for which I have been waiting."

"Yes, but I must tell my tale in order, for I fear it is not very clear in its issues. The King and the Scotch have met in combat, but with doubtful result."

"Do you mean that Leslie gave way?" cried Cromwell harshly, "and that we are confounded? But"—restraining himself—"as the Lord will!"

"You know," continued George, "you sent me a message to haste to Cambridge in time to meet a courier from London with Court dispatches?"

"Surely, surely!" replied Cromwell impatiently.

"Well, I left Norwich, and reached the *Nag's Head*, Cambridge, in good time. It was well I was thoroughly disguised, for who should the Court messenger turn out but my old tutor, Dr. Green, tricked out in a handsome courtier's array, with a wig of flowing curls and thick beard. I should not have known the old Jesuit but for his thick accent. He did not find me out, but gravely read my letter of introduction, and saluted me with great respect. I ordered refreshments and wine, and we sat down to table. After toasting the King and Thorough, which I evaded as well as I could, he said that of course I knew his errand. 'Arrests, I presume,' rejoined I, 'of some of our malignants down here. We swarm with Puritans.' Said he, 'Villainous scoundrels!—they burrow in the dark.' Wentworth whispered me as I was going, 'Be sure you lay that fellow Cromwell by the heels! He does more mischief than a hundred others,—the sloven!'"

"I shall give a Roland for that Oliver one day," said Cromwell, smiling. "But did he give you the warrants?"

"He handed me the general power from the High Court of Commission—which is here,—with this list of names for whom warrants were to be prepared."

"Aye, aye!" said Cromwell, hastily scanning it. "Kimbolton—Cromwell—Sherwood,—they are well informed. And now what news of the King? Shall we have to burrow or to taste of prison fare?"

"Oddly enough," said George, "as we were gayly chatting, and Green was telling me of the Queen's power at Court, a party of horse soldiers galloped up, who had ridden hard from the King's army with news for London. The officer in command soon entered our public room, and made for the fire. As he took off his helm and cloak, I recognized Stephen Wren. My companion at once knew and addressed him, and with familiarity requested to know the state of the army. 'I' faith!' said Stephen, 'I hardly know. We fought hard,—we did not conquer; but I was sent to hurry on reinforcements. I know no more;—I want to eat and drink. Gentlemen, well met!—shall we mess together?' I was then introduced, and we sat down again, Green taking a moment's opportunity to whisper to me, 'This fellow drinks hard,—I know him well. He is leaky!—we must come at his secret news.' This fell in with my views, as I assured my companion. They began to chaff each other, and talk scandal about the Court. I had little to do, in sustaining my part as a provincial, but to listen open-mouthed, to laugh roughly, and to ask a question or two of these accomplished and rakish courtiers. At last Wren began to sing, or squeak, snatches of military and theatrical songs, not good to repeat; and Green winked at me that his plot was taking effect. It seemed to me that Green also was fresher than usual. I said, 'You two seem to have met before.' 'Ah! so we have!—aye, Green,—where you played the Jesuit in the Alderman's house at Norwich. What has become of the girl I was so taken with?' 'She is in Norwich, I hear, again.' 'In Norwich!—the witch!—I will soon be after her!' cried Wren, exulting.

"Here," said George, "I was so stung that I rose, and put my hand to my sword, and cried, 'What does that mean?' They both stared, and rose, when, recollecting myself, I explained. 'Did you not hear a horse stop outside? Some stranger may come in upon us. Nay, excuse me—it was a mistake,' I added, opening the door.

"Wren, on sitting down again, observed, 'I expect a messenger to meet me here—to take on my dispatch. The King sent for me—yes, me! and I kissed his hand, and he promised promotion if I got a mere scrawl safe to his dear *chatte*—the Queen, you know!' 'Where is the letter?' asked Green. 'Ah, that's my secret, boys;—it's safe, I'll be bound, where you'll never guess.' I said, 'Let's give it up,—he's fooling us;—there's no such letter.' His tipsy wisdom sent us into fits as he said, 'No such letter!—have I eyes?—do I know the King?—is he my chum? Can you tell where his letter is? Never out of hand,—and yet you cannot guess,—ah!' So he went on, till we had to carry him to bed. As he went, he would carry his glove, which made me think the letter was there,—so I changed mine for his as we were on the stairs. Green did not observe me, and was glad to retire at once, bidding me farewell, and charging me to see to those arrests by morning.

"I hastened down-stairs, opened the glove, and found a written paper under the lining. I dared not stay longer, but rode straight here, without time or opportunity to read the letter, or to eat and drink. See, there is the glove." Cromwell had already seized on the important glove, and ripping it open drew out an ill-written epistle, which however was in the King's writing.

"Confound these Scots, and their old sleuth-hound Leslie! We met them on the Tyne near Newburn, and strove to prevent their crossing. Leslie's guards, consisting, I am told, of Scotch lawyers, pressed over the ford with a force of musketeers. Our horse resisted stoutly, and drove them back into the water, but then they were exposed to artillery, and broke up. Leslie came on with his main body, and we were too weak,—Wilmot was driven away, and Lord Conway with our reserve had to withdraw. We are beaten out of the Northern Counties. I am making for York, where send reinforcements. We must treat for peace, and, I fear, summon again that bear-garden, the Parliament."

Cromwell rose, and strode up and down the room, exclaiming, "My God, we are saved!—thanks for this deliverance! Well done, old Leslie! No arrests now—Parliament next; and then impeachments and remonstrances; and next, a long and hard fight,—and we must succeed,—England must be free! O God, the cause is Thine! Now, George," he added, "you have done well;—you must sleep it off in bed."

So Cromwell saw his friend at rest and fairly asleep, when, having sent off several messengers, he mounted his horse and galloped away, with fresh heart, to fetch wife and daughters from St. Ives. Even as he rode along, he was muttering "It's the turn of the tide!—we have escaped by the skin of our teeth!—God's hand is in it!—He beckons us on! The Scots are his tool now—we shall be presently! We shall pursue and overcome. Ah! what see I?—a bloody crown!—I will not lift it. What does it mean?"

CHAPTER XXXV.

JOHN MILTON DE RETOUR.

"Comme cet oiseau de passage
Le poète dans tous les temps
Chercha de voyage en voyage
Les ruines et le printemps.
Ces débris, chers à la patrie,
Lui parlent de chevalrie,
La gloire habite leur néants,
Les héros peuplent ces décombres.
Si ce ne sont plus que des ombres,
Ce sont des ombres de géants."

VICTOR HUGO.

ALICE had not long quitted Rotterdam when the Count arrived to fetch Bridge and his wife to Brussels, with an understanding that they should all go together to London. Arriving at Calais, they fortunately found an English vessel starting next morning. They took up their quarters at the chief hotel in the great square, or Place d'Armes. Some other English appeared at the common supper-table, waiting also to cross, since the news of the approaching civil war had called every true patriot home. Among these travelers was a young man of distinction who had returned from a tour abroad. They were all struck at once by the noble loveliness of his features. He was pale, but strikingly handsome. The rich curls, the large deep eye, full forehead, and delicate lips, and not less the music of his voice and words, and the graceful dignity of his manner, marked him out as no common man. He sat beside the Lady Gabrielle, and spoke easily French and Italian, as well as Latin with a priest who was at the table. "I deeply regret," he remarked, "being prevented from visiting Greece and Palestine, whither I was bound when these stirring news from England crossed my path."

"Did you see Grotius, the Swedish Ambassador, at Paris?" asked the Countess.

"Yes, Lord Scudamore presented me. What a prodigy he is of learning in the law of nations! At Rome, and Florence also, I met many learned men, and was admitted to their assemblies."

"Did you see the astronomer Galileo?" asked Bridge.

"Oh yes!—I found him full of ardor and wit, undauntedly bearing the flag of the new science against the dogmatic Church."

"They will humble him, I fear," said the Count. "But did you visit the Marquis Manso, my friend?"

"I had the good fortune," replied the Englishman, "to travel with a singular recluse, who introduced me to Manso, whom I saw often at Naples. What warm admiration did we exchange for the great Tasso, of whom he told me most interesting particulars. I fear I was rather too free in expressing my religious views in the Papal territory; but I ever effected the honest liberty of free speech."

"Have you been in Geneva?" asked Bridge.

"I was there some time, and had daily conferences with the learned theologian Deodati, and other Calvinistic pastors, also with the philosopher Spanheim. I learnt much there of the virtue of a republic, and the pure and strict form of Church polity without bishops."

"No doubt similar to what we have just left in Holland, where they have no priests," Bridge answered.

"I was destined as a child," was the reply, "to the office of the priesthood, but I came to see that he who took orders must be bound by vows which he was like either to sicken of or to break."

"Before I came abroad, sir," said Bridge, "I should have taken your words in bad part, as an English clergyman, but I have learnt the need of further reformation."

"Indeed, sir, it were well that England had enfranchised herself from this impertinent yoke of prelates, under whose inquisitions and tyrannical duncery no free or splendid wit can flourish."

This interesting traveler, after further intercourse, then retired for the night, asking leave to present to the ladies a copy of a small essay at poetry which he trusted they would not disdain. He also hoped to have the honor of journeying with so agreeable a party on the morrow. After he had gone, they curiously examined his book, on which they read this title: *The Mask of Comus. For the Earl of Bridgewater. By John Milton, Esq., M.A.* A cursory survey proved the elegant tastes, the lofty purity, the beautiful images, and the copious learning at the command of this singular man.

The following day they turned out to examine the curiosities of the town, and found Mr. Milton, with an attendant, occupied in the same work. This valet, Jules, was an old servant, used to foreign life, who waited on "Master John," as he called his master, with an assiduity which blended the affection of a father with the authority of a keeper. "Now, Master John," they heard him say, "this is the ancient city of Calais. Ah, Master John, let me button the top of thy overcoat, for the wind is shrewd. Save us! he's among the angels and the stars!—See here, Master John, is the great church of Notre Dame, with fine glass windows. I'll settle with the verger, Master John. Take some heed of the statues; and don't walk about like a sleep-walker, Master John,—as, indeed, you have done all night."

Here the Count saluted the poet, who began

to converse with the ladies, while his attendant held forth to the gentlemen.

"A great man, sirs, is Master John; but like a child in worldly matters. Bless you! he hardly knows silver from gold or copper. He would go into company half-dressed. He is often lost for hours, but his lips pour out a flood of words like a galloping horse! In London all the learned folk buzz about him like bees about a hive. Heavens! he has put on his hat in church, and he is brawling with the priest!"

So all the way about the town Jules led his submissive master. Scarcely noticing these interferences, which were grotesque enough to observers, Milton conversed charmingly on lofty subjects of poetry and letters. The conversation was continued on board the vessel,—every now and then Jules interrupting. Thus when he was expressing nobly his hope as a poet hereafter "*to celebrate in glorious and lofty hymns the throne and equipage of God's almightiness—to sing victorious agonies of martyrs and saints—the deeds and triumphs of just and pious nations,*" Jules arrived with a tankard of beer, with "Master John, cheer thy inner man, and drink this." And when, after obeying this challenge, the master continued speaking of a time when "*some one may be heard offering a high strain in new and lofty measures to celebrate the Divine mercies in this land, whereby this great and warlike nation, casting far from her the rags of her old vices,*" Jules came up again, with "Master John, save thyself from yon sailor with his pail and mop, or he will souse thy legs, Master John!—he has thrice bade thee move."

Nevertheless, when Milton returned, he conversed with the gentlemen on the affairs of Europe and England with profound intelligence and patriotic enthusiasm. Amid these conversations, his quick eyes were ever turning to the ocean, the heavens, and the objects of changing nature. "See," he would say, directing the ladies, "how the heavenly light flashes on the ridges of the waves, and how deep the black mass closes under it!—light and darkness near together make each other more intense." Again, presently, he lifted his hand higher, where the orb of day shone in mid heaven, and light, fleecy clouds, drifted close to his bright disc, transfigured in his glory, which before were dull and opaque. He solemnly said, "So we carnal souls, full of damp and darkness, shall one day float near Heaven's Lord, and be 'changed into the same image from glory to glory.'" These and the like fine images came from him involuntarily during other converse—the sublime and beautiful over-brimming of a heavenly mind.

"Do you know Cromwell?" said the Count. "He is said to be the rising man among the leaders of the House."

"I know something of him," was the reply, "though I am not wont to hang about the skirts of great men; but he has honored me with notice. He is among the few who have acquired the government of themselves, and have subdued a host of vain hopes, fears, and passions which infest the soul. No wonder, then, if he excels in commanding other men in council or in war. I expect the greatest things of him in circumstances when he may be left as the sole remaining pillar of the heaving State."

"Are you, sir," asked Bridge, "an adherent of the Episcopal Church?—for you seem, beyond question, a devout man."

"Reverend sir, I am a man fully devoted to the service of the kingdom of God, but also grievously disappointed with the carnality and corruption of all the Churches—the English not excepted."

"Sir, your words are sadly true," said Bridge. "Do you think the English Church is reformable? or do you suppose that lovers of scriptural liberty will have to form fresh Churches of a pattern like the Swiss, the Dutch, and the Scotch?"

"What, reverend sir, the new Parliament or a Scotch alliance may effect is hard to say; but to me, as a Bible-reader, all these new Churches appear to fall short of a true model: new Presbytery is but old priest writ large."

"Know you, sir, the form of Church styled Independent, such as I have just been pastor of in Rotterdam, some few of which exist near London?"

"Assuredly," said Milton. "I know Henry Jacob, pastor of their Church in Southwark; and I love to worship there when I can. Cromwell also, and many of the Puritan leaders, prefer this new form of Church. I rejoice to find in you, dear sir, a worthy pastor of the same, and would humbly encourage you in holding firmly by such just principles. Such a Church in Norwich or Yarmouth would be a light throughout the Eastern Counties. May you be honored to kindle it! It must bear fruit in after-ages, though perhaps in advance of our own times."

In such converse the time slipped by, at the dinner-table and afterward, till Jules returned, saying, "Master John, look up from thy visions and words,—there is Dover Castle!—hark to the gun from the heights! Come, Master John, and put on thy outer cloak. Now, Master John, Master John!" cried the shrill voice as they moved away, but not before the Count had exchanged addresses and invitations to meet again. Milton was going on; the others were resting a night at Dover. So they met with, and parted from, "Master John Milton."

Bridge was walking about Dover in order to survey the town, when he suddenly met in a passage near the old castle the little restless form of his old Bishop, Wren, flying abroad as a refugee. Bridge addressed his former persecutor: "My lord, fear not that I bear a grudge for official wrongs."

"Ah, Bridge, the tables are turned! I thought I was doing my duty. Mock me not with past titles! I had no idea I was so hated till I was hissed out of Norwich gates. Laud shrank from me—the Court was shut against me—those who had pushed me on abused me, after my failure."

"Dr. Wren," said the Fleming, who had joined them, "you have done your best to ruin Norwich, by driving away its best citizens and trade. You have helped to ruin the English Church by tyranny to such as this good man. You well deserve, in my opinion, a worse penalty than you suffer. God keep you from doing any further mischief! You had better get away while no one knows you, or you may feel the fury of English hands. Farewell." The old Bishop slunk away, and his former victims took post for London.

The party, returning from Holland, after an easy journey, reached the lodgings taken for them in Westminster early in November, 1640, and soon discovered how critical was the state of affairs. The Long Parliament had just begun to assume its power, and the Court to tremble with rage at its audacity. All the years of subjugation had not tamed the champions of liberty, but made them wiser and more resolute. After receiving the congratulations of the Dutch Ambassador, their old friend Von Pauw, the Count and Countess agreed to be presented by him to the Queen. The town was in a ferment, as it was rumored the great Minister, Strafford, was come to London to curb and bridle the English Parliament, as he had done Ireland. Placards were posted about, "Down with Strafford!" and knots of people were angrily disputing the state of matters.

Some of the Queen's ladies who remembered Gabrielle, when they called at the Palace flitted to her with all sorts of questions and innuendos, to whom she presented her husband with a sort of shame that she could ever have been one of those saucy butterflies. "Old Tremouille," laughed one, "is married to Derby, and frightens us no more." "Eva and Flora," rejoined another, "are married, and live in great state. The Queen is gayer than ever: she rules her King, and pets her children. Little Charles is a dear, and flirts with us prettily. We hate the Parliament as ever, and the Scots, and all that *canaille*;—nothing but war will put them down. We rave about Prince Rupert,—he is so handsome! and Father Rosetti, the Pope's nuncio,—he is so gay! As for stupid, dull old England, with her Puritans and prudery, we wish we were rid of it, like you." Gabrielle listened to all this wild talk, and much more, in bewilderment, to think of the change, since she could hear and take part in such silly ribaldry.

When presented to the Queen, Henrietta kissed her warmly, and held her hand for the Count to kiss, whispering, "I thought, Sir Fleming, you had a better object in my Court than the sale of Dutch goods!" Afterward, they followed the Queen to her own apartments, where she poured out numberless questions about Holland and Paris. The King now entered, leading in a man of princely bearing, whom the Fleming recognized as the former patriot Wentworth, now Earl of Strafford, and a courtier. Charles led him to the Queen: "Our noble friend and Minister, Strafford, my Mariette, desires again to tender his homage. Assure him how welcome he is in our present position."

The Queen did not look well pleased, for she ever jaloused favorites of the King. "Lord Strafford is right welcome," she replied. "We heard of his loyal zeal in Ireland, and hope he may subdue our foes here also." This was said with a tone of question rather than assurance, and the Queen added, in lower tones, "And I trust he may not over-reckon his power."

Strafford looked on the company with a bold air, and having done proud homage to the Queen, he rose, and said, "Madam, I have striven to do my duty in some difficult affairs, and truly not unsuccessfully. I am not here by my own will, for I thought I could exert more power at a distance than in London. His Majesty, my gracious master, was pleased with words of confidence to command my presence, and I have come, though I well know the risks I incur. May I hope for the favor of those whom I readily serve with my life and fortunes?"

"Strafford, you are a jewel!" exclaimed Charles. "I know not who else has done such great things, or is so able to open a safe way for the future. These knaves are after their old courses, and they seem bolder than ever. They threaten my servants; they hold fast the supplies; and they are in some quarters making provision for war. You only, Strafford, can control this pack of wild dogs. I have myself, as you say, urged your coming; and as for risk, I pledge my sacred word they shall not hurt a hair of your head;—I would sooner lay down my own."

The Queen looked up rather peevishly, and said, "I shall not second that rash engagement, Charles, which you have made to favorites before. The Lord Strafford is here to fulfill his high duty, and there need no such tragic scenes about it."

Strafford thanked the King for the honor of his confidence, which he would do his best to merit; and added, "I have great hope that the measures by which in Ireland I wrung forth large sums of money will erelong succeed here also. I know the men opposed to us better than many; and though they are men of lofty theory, and masters of intrigue and chicane, they are not men of action. My sudden coming has surprised them, and ere they recover we shall make their resistance vain. I rely on the full countenance of His Majesty and the Court.

The Count and his lady quitted the Palace with sad hearts, not wishing to enter it again, and with a feeling that the Court was more insane in its pretensions, less regardful of appearances, and more divided by jealousy than ever. A poor prospect for England!

The Count and Bridge had promised to visit John Milton. They reached a large house in the Strand, and were received by Jules.

"Welcome, sirs!—Master John will be blithe to see ye. We got him home sorely weary, but a bath has refreshed him. In his library and among his books he is all himself. A wonderful man is Master John!—Follow me." Then pausing, as strains of sweet music made the walls and boards tremble, he said, "Whist! I like not to break in. Master John, when his music is interrupted, is confused, and apt to be troubled. Let us wait for a pause."

They tarried, and listened with good will to a sort of gentle overture, with one or two melodies interwoven, which at last died away, and the sounds ceased. They were shown into a fine large study,—a small organ in one recess, and a writing-table in another. Both the gentlemen expressed the pleasure his music had given them. "Oh, I fear you have been waiting;—my old tyrant Jules will have kept you on the stair. It is good of you to come so soon. I fear my poet-life must be suspended. I must lay down the lyre, with its fascinating tones, and buckle on the controversial panoply. For when I see tyranny and intolerance trampling on the sacred prerogatives of God and man, I am compelled by the obligations of virtue, and by the loud summons of beleagured truth, to lend my aid in the dreadful drama which is now opening."

On asking what Milton thought of the effect of the return of Strafford, he suddenly remembered that Cromwell, Pym, and other leaders had promised to meet that day with the purpose of considering together that important event.

It was not long before the firm tread of Cromwell was heard, accompanied by Kimbolton, Pym, Grimstone, Hampden, Hollis, the younger Vane, and some of less note.

Cromwell at once sat down with our two friends, and conversed about Rotterdam and Norwich, and all their interests, making them promise to visit him and his family in London. He named them to the other members of the Conference, and recalled the presence of the Count when Wentworth was among them as a friend—though even then a doubted one.

"Yes," said Pym, "our dear Eliot never trusted him; and I have pledged myself to his face that, though he has left us, I never will leave him till his head is off his shoulders."

"That," exclaimed Cromwell, "brings us *in rem*. How are we to deal with his sudden arrival, which is evidently meant to overawe us?"

Then said Kimbolton, "Were it not well to let the novelty of his appearance wear itself off?—to wait till his impetuosity may give us an advantage?"

Cromwell sternly said, "God has put him in our power by the King's ordering him here."

"You mean," asked Milton, "we should impeach him before the Lords?"

"I do," said Cromwell with flashing eye. "I would not give him a day; but before he can reach his place to-morrow I would have the impeachment passed and presented."

"There are legal difficulties and risks in such a course," said Pym, "yet I concur in its policy. It would give a complete shock to all the Court plans, and strike out the chief cornerstone of their arch."

"The Lord has sent light!" exclaimed Cromwell with passion: "that's the very way! As he comes forth in his pride and power, like another Haman, to crush us, he finds his footing undermined, and is a helpless captive. We see our course," was Cromwell's conclusion, "and will retire to make all ready. Thanks, Milton, for this secure and unsuspected place of conference."

History relates how successfully the patriots executed this bold plan, and how Strafford found himself anticipated and condemned, while the solemn promise of his King was again broken by his fall. Our friends were spectators of that great scene of political justice. They saw the haughty Earl leave the House—his sword taken from him,—and as he passed no man uncovered to him, and all seemed glad of his disgrace, The affect was magical: the last buttress of despotism had broken down, and the friends of liberty took heart.

"Surely," said Bridge, "we shall escape the horrors of war! The Court must give way, and the King will come to agreement with the Parliament."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE RECTOR'S WELCOME TO NORWICH.

"At length I met a worthy reverend man,
Who thus began: 'There was a Prince of old
At Salem dwelt with flock and fold;
He sweetly lived, yet sweetness did not save
His life from foes.
After his death, out of his grave
There sprang twelve stalks of wheat,
Which many wondering at, got some of those
To plant and set.
It prospered strangely, and did soon disperse
Through all the earth!'" HERBERT.

"Now, Will," said his buxom wife in softer tones than usual, "if ever you bestirred yourself, you must be busy to-day. The day the Rector comes home must not find your father's son asleep. We must try to get back our snug house and clerkship, with its dues."

"But," answered Will, rather testily, "you women are always ready with a plan. I cannot break my promise to the Colonel, or Major, as he must be called here, when war is all but afoot. "I've no liking for droning out Amens when men are giving and receiving stout blows for England's sake."

"Alack, alack! this war meets one at every turn. Should you come back from the war with an arm or a leg less—which God forefend—it's no bad thing to have a comfortable cottage and a peaceful office to retire to."

"If you please," cried Will, "I would rather bring back all my natural limbs. But what do you want me to do?"

"That young priest, Edward, had great fuss about his return. Well, you would not like our dear Rector, after his years of noble exile, to have no public welcome. And yet the people are that backward—I can't make them out. So go you round among the parishioners, and get them to make a procession and meet him beyond the gates."

"I'll do your bidding, wife; but I am not so sure how it will work, for 'Out of time, out of mind,' you know. Then they've heard of strange changes, and that the Rector comes home, not a regular English clergyman, but a sort of Dutch heretic, to entice them away."

"That's just as I thought. Now you and I know the Rector is really altered, and he may want to carry out his changes here. Good-bye then to your father's old place, which Simon Raven is keen after. Go and tell the people to be beforehand with the Rector,—to bring him in with a great company. Then, when he would come home, tell them all to bear him on to the church, shouting, 'A sermon! a sermon!' When he is in his own pulpit, and looks round on us all, he will not have the heart to vex us."

"Why, woman," said Will, scratching his head, "whoever made you think of such a scheme? I'll go about it with the best will in life."

Ann's plan was indeed one of the best that could have been devised; nor did it fail in execution. A handsome present was subscribed for, and a memorial of welcome signed for presentation. The whole parish was soon on foot in gala dress, and the Green of Tombland was ornamented with arches, while tables were set for a social gathering after the folk should have left the church. The people gathered readily at the proper time, and advanced in procession, headed by the band of George's troop, now in military guard of the city.* At the London Road they waited patiently, till at last the small party on horseback appeared. There was the Major on his charger in advance, and Bridge, with his wife on a pillion. There was a slight pause when many of the flock, who had been exiles, came forward to greet their friends. Good Alderman Sherwood and the Rector embraced like brothers,—almost in continental fashion. Taylor grasped his friend's hand, and brushed away unbidden tears, as he said, "'Tis a bright day for us all that brings back to us a good and faithful man."

A select group included the Brightlings and the Quakeress, Lucy Graves. Mr. Brightling's large person and warm salutations occupied the Rector so long that his daughter, *sans ceremonie*, pulled his arm, saying, "Dad, you quite shut us out, and let no one view our good friend but yourself."

Then the Quakeress stepped forth, and with silvery voice and charming simplicity said, "Dear man of God, thou hast borne shame and suffering for the Master,—thou hast been in the fiery trial. Was not thy Lord with thee?—hast thou not learned new experiences?—art thou not come back to lead us out of carnal bondage? Surely thou hast been in Patmos, and seen the Lord, and received the outpouring of the Spirit, and been raised out of the letter. Thou wilt never go back into the old legal synagogue! Welcome, thou newly-consecrated minister of the elect!" A solemn hush fell on the assembly as the holy woman spoke thus, like a prophetess of the olden time. So the procession divided, took the Rector's party in its middle, and moved on briskly over the hill to Tombland, where, instead of pausing, it bore on for the open church, many crying out "A sermon!" All protests were vain. The church was soon filled. The Rector was escorted into his former pulpit. He looked down from the familiar elevation, and saw the pews filled by the old families. There sat his wife, and his Alice beside her, for she had joined her mother at the porch. After gazing all round a few minutes, the Rector buried his face in his hands and wept aloud, while the congregation re echoed his emotion. For some time all was silence, weeping, and prayer.

Will Barnard was pushed by his wife into the desk, and he broke up the contagious grief by raising a psalm of praise, in which all by degrees joined heartily. Bridge then read the sentences of Scripture, and some prayers and thanksgivings; and, gaining calmness, he at last addressed them from the same text as he first used at Rotterdam, on the promise of Christ's presence with His waiting people. He gave a brief description of that Sabbath, and the good people who welcomed them there, and the hand of God with them in works of mercy. Then he spoke of his gladness to return,—of his sorrow for England's troubles,—his sense of a need of further reformation in religion,—his unwillingness to commit himself till he knew what would be officially done. He promised at least to be their afternoon lecturer, as that office was restored. He called them to trust in the Head of the Church to bring England into better ways in Church and State, and declared his purpose to live among them as before. After some further practical exhortations, he closed the exciting service and left the pulpit. Again and again were the salutations renewed, till the people dropped away, and allowed their beloved minister to enter the Rectory, before the meeting on the Green should take place.

Will Barnard and his wife were at length the only occupants of the church, when the former softly said, "Now, Ann, was it not well done?—I'm sure I've had hard work. It's all gone right—hasn't it, wife? You look rather out of sorts."

"You've done well, Will, and the plan was a good one; but the Rector puzzles me. He lives in the Rectory, but shall we have the clerk's house again? I can't make it out. I must ask Master George."

By this time the people were seated at the benches on the old Tombland Green. It was a bright spring day, and the towers of the Cathedral gateways looked down on the gathering. The Pocthorpe Guild had also turned out in a peaceable array, with Snap and all, having an unusual request, to entreat the Rector to begin again his lectures and preaching among them, which they had greatly missed. Bridge appeared with his wife; the popular Major George Sherwood followed, and Alice with his father. Presently silence was called for the Major, who was received with vigorous applause as he "welcomed back in their name their beloved Rector and his family." Bridge responded with brief but well-chosen words.

In the Rectory a sort of *levée* took place, in which the personal friends of the family offered their cordial congratulations. It was remarked that his brother Edward was not present "because of his High Church principles."

The breach between King and Parliament now rapidly widened, and all tended to open war. Both parties appointed commanders in the counties, and were raising forces for the struggle. In Norwich, Major Sherwood was Cromwell's trusted deputy. The Bishop had fled away, and so had several conspicuous Royalists. But many of the clergy who were on that side remained in the city. Some of these endeavored to draw secretly together money and recruits for the King. One of the most active of these was the Rev. Edward Sherwood, from whose parish many youths had been sent to the royal camp. Warm scenes had occurred between the brothers on this account, and his father and Bridge had remonstrated with the zealous priest.

Just at this time Stephen Wren made his appearance in Norwich, and took occasion to pay violent attentions to Alice. George felt that Alice was scarcely as much in sympathy with his decided partisanship as he would have wished. She had been drawn into Edward's parish work, and he had taken up warmly her idea of Homes for the destitute. Insensibly, her warm benevolence, thus stirred, revolted from the clash of angry words and forcible deeds in which George was necessarily engaged.

One day as Alice and May Hope were together, Edward and Wren called in about some parish matters. "There will be plenty of inmates for our Home, Alice," said Edward, "if all the men are dragged off to fight. How are the wives to be supported, and the widows and orphans?"

"Do you know," said Edward, "Stephen has a message direct from the King, declaring his readiness for peace, which is only prevented by a few malignants."

"Aye," cried Wren, "the ladies are all with the King, and all real born gentlemen. It is only these base-born Hampdens, and Pyms, and Cromwells."

Just then the Major entered, with a frown on his brow, as not liking the company he saw together, and having heard the last scurrilous words.

"Cromwell!" said he. "Now, Captain Wren, what say you of my friend? 'Base-born' you call him, and yet he is descended from the Lord Treasurer Cromwell. And who was your grandfather, sir?"

Now the low origin of the Bishop was notorious; so Wren replied, "I care not who knows that I am on my lawful monarch's side. There ought to be no other in England."

"Then, sir, the sooner you betake yourself to his presence and flag, whither he has gone, deserting his royal duties—let me say with all courtesy—the better; and I warn you to take care how you seek to promote his separate cause here."

"Brother," said Edward, "Captain Wren is my old friend."

"My brother," replied the Major, "I am loth to say it, but his presence is perilous to you, and might lead to your banishment from this your home."

"Never," cried Edward, "while you remain here to mislead the people from their loyalty."

"Edward, as for me, I have little hope of abiding here. I must away to a soldier's camp, and to the field of battle."

"Aye, brother, and bring down on your head the guilty blood of thousands of fellow-countrymen."

"Edward, I warn you, and your dangerous friend, that in public duty, as I am placed here, I shall have to deal with you, however painfully, as if I were an indifferent person."

"I might return the warning as an officer of His Majesty," replied Wren; "but my plans are not likely to occasion these serious consequences."

"I also warn you, George, that we differ wholly," said Edward, "on matters of life and death. We will oppose you to our utmost in the service of God and our King. *George, you are a traitor!*"

"*Edward, you are a dupe!*"

The brothers stood close to each other, glaring with eyes of fire, and with hands all but ready to grapple or strike. Alice and May had risen in alarm, and placed themselves between, and were gently and lovingly seeking to calm them both, when the Major turned quickly on his heel, and simply repeating, "I leave my friendly warning with you," quitted the room.

Alice and May retired directly after, in great agitation.

Alice, sobbing, embraced her friend, saying, "Oh, May, what does this hatred mean? Can George be so hard?"

May replied with tearful voice, "Verily, Alice, it is terrible. Why is Edward so angry?"

Then Alice exclaimed, "Oh, it is that wretch Wren! Why does Edward hold to him?"

"If Wren is so bad, Alice, why do you endure him?"

"I hate him," flashed out Alice; "but Edward will bring him to our house. He is to blame for that."

"Oh yes," was May's rejoinder, "Edward is always to blame,—you both turn against him!"

"Ridiculous girl!" Alice screamed, now highly excited. "And you are my oldest, dearest friend,—and you take Edward's part against George! May, you are a cold, sarcastic mystery!"

"Alice, for the first time, you are unjust and unkind!"

"May, I will not bear your impertinence!"

"Alice, shame on your hateful insinuations!"

"May, let us part before your rudeness becomes intolerable! I thought I could bear aught from you."

"Alice, farewell,—and farewell to your vile aspersions!"

Then the two irate maidens stood awhile gazing on each other, and trembling at what they had said, till by degrees the hot ebullition spent itself, and better feelings regained sway. Then they slowly approached each other, and wept on each other's necks, sobbing out,

"Alice!" "May!"

"Can this be the war beginning to work here?"

"Are we women, as well as men, to hate and fight?"

"Alice, I am so sorry!"

"May, forgive! I forgot myself a moment."

So quickly faded down the threatening storm, which in many other homes cruelly parted women as well as men, and set them in deadly feud against each other.

Meantime the Major was in his own room, holding an important discourse with his factotum Will Barnard. "Master George, these King's-men are after some plot: their backs and hair are up like our cat's when she smells a mouse. They are mad at losing the Castle, and the Town Hall, and the City gates. They have news that the royal standard is soon to float, and orders to make good any strong place they can seize."

"There is nothing here," said George, "that could be fortified but the Bishop's Palace, or the Cathedral."

"But what think you of the Close?" quoth Will.

"Why," said the Major, "there we could blockade and starve them out. But we have possession of the gates to Tombland, and of the Ferry, and the Palace gate. How will they get in?"

"One or two Pocthorpians came to me today and said that Master Wren and others have been busy visiting their houses lately, sir. The Cathedral is being prepared just now, and the workmen come mostly from Pocthorpe, and have been let in and out morning and evening."

"True, but they belong to our party," observed George.

"Most of them do," was Will's reply; "but you see drink and money are sad persuaders, and it seems a few of them are won over. At night they leave late, and go over the river by a small light bridge they throw over, and by which they cross one or two at a time. This bridge they are bound to remove, but to-night the traitors are to contrive to be the last, and to leave the bridge. Over this Wren's party are to cross by night. Now, we can easily catch them crossing, destroy the bridge, and drive them off."

"Nay, nay," cried the Major, "it were better to catch them in the fact, and so be able to rid the City of them at once. I will use a trick I learned in Holland, which was practiced by the brave Dutch in wresting the city of Breda from Spain. You and I must first go and see these Pocthorpe workmen and draw them into our plans."

The Major and Will, therefore, with Herbert Hervey, who was now assisting George in his military affairs, visited Pocthorpe in the dusk, and got together the workmen. George bade them let the plan of the conspirators take effect. He ordered the sentinels on the relief of guard to allow themselves to be beaten off. These presently came to tell him that the gates of the Close were occupied by the foe. Soon after dawn, he, Herbert, and a party of officers and men approached the main Erpingham gate and demanded entrance. They were received by jeers and taunts from within, and by shouts of "The King is master here!" and "Down with the rebels!" On further summons by sound of trumpet, they were warned away on pain of being fired on. The Major then quietly drew off, but sent his men into the St. George's church-yard. All seemed to be quiet for an hour or so. The workmen came as usual over their own bridge to the Cathedral, and as they were supposed to be friends, and had the password, the guards of the conspirators let them pass. Had they narrowly examined, they might have seen that, though dressed in workmen's clothes, their upright gait and firm march were of a different sort from the slouching walk of real workmen. The gleam of weapons might also have been seen under their jackets, while their quick glances at each other showed an unusual excitement. However, they loitered one by one into the Cathedral, and clustered round the porch.

A great wagon stood near, full of *débris*, which was usually driven through the main gate to be emptied at certain periods. With rude jokes and staves of song, some of the supposed builders prepared to drive the heavy vehicle toward the great gate. As it rolled on it was driven into a deep rut or gutter, where it stuck so fast that the men called their comrades to push the vehicle along. With oaths and reproaches these arrived, and by main force drew and pushed the wagon to the gate. There was some demur among the guards about opening, but when, looking from the wicket, they saw the coast clear, the portcullis was drawn up high enough for the great cart to pass. Just as it got right under the ponderous sliding gate, it stuck fast again, and needed all the efforts of the party to move it. In the hurry the traces were cut and the horses driven off, while a tramp and rush was heard in the street. The portcullis was hurriedly let fall, but the wagon stopped its descent. A strong company of well-armed troops, headed by the Major and Herbert Hervey, and reinforced by the workmen, who threw off their artisan clothes and appeared as well-armed soldiers, effected an entrance. The feeble watch was overpowered;—there was no concentrated resistance, owing to the surprise. The leaders were all seized in the Bishop's Palace. George had charged Will to find Edward, and to take him carefully home till he arrived. The rest, with Captain Wren at their head, were drummed out of the city, which was thus rid of some dangerous characters.

The Major now made his way home, with his friend Herbert, for a painful meeting with his brother.

"Dear Edward," said he, on entering the room, "I am glad I have been able to save you from worse consequences."

He met, however, only the cold angry stare of an opponent vexed and humbled by defeat. "I am in your power, George; and I can hardly remember just now that we are brothers, or even friends."

"Edward, you will live to acquit me. I am doing the best for you. I purpose to have you escorted to overtake a company who left yesterday to join the King. There you will be with friends."

"Aye, so you remove me and others out of the way of your sinful ambition; but, George, a righteous judgment will not be slow to follow you, though now you seem to prosper."

Herbert Hervey strove to expostulate with angry Edward, and to witness to George's precautions for his safety and to his love for him. Vain was the effort then, so George merely said, "I trust, brother, your warnings are well meant, but I will not argue with a prisoner."

Very painful scenes ensued with the parents and the ladies, but George stood firm, and at last Edward owned it was his duty to do so. The Major then escorted his brother with all attention beyond the gates, and then set him free, with every provision he required for his journey.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE SURPRISE AT LETHERINGSETT.

"Then did the Kentish commons cry
Unto their leaders still;
And so marched forth in warlike sort,
And stood on Swanscombe Hill:
Where in the woods they hid themselves
Under the shady grove,
Thereby to get the vantage good
Of all their foes unseen."
OLD BALLAD IN STRANGE HISTORIES.

THE Eastern Counties, amid the general disturbance and insurrection of the whole country, had enjoyed a charmed and enviable quiet, through the union arranged by Kimbolton and Cromwell for their mutual protection.

When Stephen Wren and those with him were ejected from Norwich, as detected conspirators whose plots had failed, their baffled anger vented itself in many hot execrations, and ideas of vengeance.

In crossing the level and marshy country, they discerned at some distance a small body of soldiers, who paused to reconnoiter, as they did. For some time both groups remained watching each other; but Wren impatiently ordered an advance. On inquiry, they heard to their surprise that these troops were Royalists going to Boston, on the sea-shore. The leader, an elderly knight, beckoned Wren aside, and said, "You seem of the right stamp; but whence come you, and what have you been doing?" Then Wren related his Norwich misfortunes.

"Strange!" said the other; "you have been knocking at the front door, while I am sent to get in at the back. And now you must go with us."

Wren answered, "I go on to the King's army, and I don't know where you are going."

"That is a great secret," said the knight,—"close as an oystershell. You will not find the King in the North,—he has marched towards Nottingham. I am to meet at Boston a large body of soldiers, and to take ship and make for the coast of Norfolk, where we have friends. Then we are to push on for Norwich, and surprise the City. We hear that most of the troops have gone away."

"'Tis true," said Wren, "there are not many troops in Norwich; but the leaders are vigilant. However, if you will take me with you, I will blithely see if I may not be of use to you, and get my revenge."

On the way, company after company swelled their numbers. Their leader was Sir Christopher Heydon of Saxlingham. He was a strict soldier, and a man of quaint devices and grotesque humor, whom the death of his lovely wife, the Lady Mirabelle, had made gray and sad. He was constantly using in his speech parables and similes. His monument to his wife in the church at Saxlingham is a marvel of conceits. Among numerous figures and statues in stone, are those of a woman veiled treading

* The records of the time name Major Sherwood as nominated by Parliament, under Cromwell, to take military command in Norwich. The soldiers seem to have given him for his probity a name such as the Roundheads affected, for he is called Major *Livewell* Sherwood.

on a tortoise; a swan charged with stars; a centaur in a labyrinth; a man blowing bladders; a hare couchant; wind blowing on a cock's tail; a quiver full of arrows hanging on a palm tree; with other curious images, on which this strange man published a treatise.

The embarkation in several small vessels was safely accomplished, and the weather favored the voyage. At Cley they were joined by an agent, in whom Wren saluted his old friend Green, who had been coaxing and bribing the sailors along the coast to join them.

They proposed to march on at once to Blickling, nearly half way, avoiding the little town of Holt, as it was Parliamentarian. They were to leave the road at a place called Letheringsett, where the Cley river crosses the road. At Blickling they were to refresh themselves, wait till nightfall, and then in all haste to make a dash at the old City.

The market-town of Holt, though small, is very ancient and flourishing. It is set on a hill amidst a wide heath. This small place was closely connected with London, as the birthplace of the celebrated merchant family of the Greshams. Sir John Gresham, in the year 1456, converted the family mansion at Holt into a free grammar school, which was endowed very nobly. The Holt school was placed under the conduct of the ancient guild of London Fishmongers. Communications were therefore frequent between this little provincial town and its City patron, so that news often reached Holt sooner than places larger and more central. One of the governors of the Holt school was Sir William Hervey, a man of extensive property in the neighborhood, who resided in a large house near the town, and was father of George's friend Herbert.

Rumors had reached Sir William Hervey of the presence of a stranger about Cley who was going about among the fishermen. Two or three mornings before the expedition of the King's forces left Boston, Sir William inquired of his children, at breakfast, about this strange visitor. His wife, a lady of quick humor and intelligence, said, laughing, "Farmer Kent was over yesterday, and he said 'a chap had been axing arter his pigs and eggs, who knew nuffin of one or 'tother; and then he axed for some milk to drink the King's health.' On Kent answering, 'Let the King see arter his own health, nor ours,' the fellow slunk away."

"Oh, a Royalist agent!" said Sir William.

"I ll ride over and have a sniff at him, father, said the younger Rudolph, a sprack youngster far beyond his years, whose odd ways were a constant source of mirth.

"Do, my lad," said the father. "Take the groom, and let him be armed; and keep out of mischief."

On his way the youth amused himself by asking at farm-houses whether any fellow had come asking for eggs or milk. A laugh was the general answer; but near Cley a farmer's wife replied, "Yes. The master was away, and he was that troublesome I give him the milk all over his red face, and he took hisself off." By the sea, the sailors and fishermen took the joke ill, saying, "Fellows were always about, and every tramp was glad of an egg or a drink of milk."

One of these, however, whom Rudolph knew well, winked, and answered, "Now, Rudy, lad, don't you come and burn your fingers by putting out strangers' fires."

"Oh, Tom, then there are fires kindled? Now what lark's up? You know I'm always game."

"I don't know much about it; but fishermen don't always, like Peter, find gold and silver money in their fish."

"What! gold and silver as well as fires! Now, Tom, you must tell me all about this. Father sent me to find out the mischief."

"Bless your little heart! and what will you do?" jeered the man.

"I'll tell you what," replied Rudolph, "my boat shall be handed over to Bill Jones, and you don't see the shine of my money." Thus after awhile the boy flouted and threatened the sailor, till he learned that foes were looked for over the sea every day. He found out the public-house where Green was staying, and caught him with several fishermen, who at once lounged away. Without the least delay he accosted an old acquaintance as if he were quite his equal: "Friend Draper of Cromer, I believe I have the honor——"

"Not so," Green answered. "You don't know me, and I am not of these parts."

"Ah! come from over the sea, perhaps?" suggested the lad. "Queer rolling things these yachts."

Green stared, and answered, "My lad, the times are queer for answering strangers' questions."

"Yes," replied the youth, "you're a wise one to come as far as possible out of trouble. Here we know nothing of strife or politics, King or Parliament. You are safe here, sir."

Green could not avoid an odd laugh, but said, "Perhaps not so safe as you think; at least, I must keep my caution."

"Do you know His Gracious Majesty, sir?—I wish I did."

Green laughed heartily, and said, "You would help his cause then? You ought to have a boys' regiment."

The boy replied, "His friends are over yonder," pointing over the water to the north. "This bit of Wash is not favorable to kings. I often wonder they don't come out of the Humber here, only it's bad landing hereabouts."

"You seem to know all about it, my fine youngster! Take care they don't catch you. But I have my work to do. I mustn't listen to your gossip, good-sooth."

"I'd give something to know what it is. If you go fishing, take me. What can you be after here?"

"I shall be off as I came, my boy, when I have shot my bolt."

"At Norwich or at Holt?" sang the boy. He rode slowly away, but was no sooner out of sight than he galloped home as fast as horse could carry him. He only stopped at home to apprise his father of the scheme which was on foot. The boy then took a fresh horse and hastened to Norwich. The father and mother looked fondly at the merry light-weight which danced on the prancing horse, followed by a couple of serving-men.

Young Rudolph reached the City safely, and found the Major with his brother.

"Why, Rudy, all over mud and hot with riding!—what brings you here out of your quiet parts? Does father want his law papers, or mother or sisters a new shawl or bonnet?"

The boy, full of excitement, caught the Major's arm, saying, "You must both follow me, with every soldier you can muster; and march quick, for the King's troops are daily looked for over the Wash; and the Cley fishermen are bribed to help their landing and attack on this city. They stay at Blickling, and come here by night. That's true, for I have been to Cley myself, and found it all out."

They now entered into serious conference, the result of which was immediate preparations to start that night, with every soldier they could safely remove,—intending to be at Holt early in the morning. Not to excite attention, the soldiers were sent out in small parties, and by different gates; and were to rendezvous on the wide sheltered heath of Mousehold, near to Duffin's Dale, where Ket's men encamped in his famous rebellion; and then, by cross roads, to strike the Holt road by Cawston, which avoids Blickling, their enemy's chief place of succor.

At the appointed hour George, Herbert, Rudolph, and a small body of mounted troops, made their way to Mousehold Heath. The moon was young, and the night was chill and rather misty; but there was light enough to see the bare and desolate sand-hills and shaded valleys of this well-chosen meeting-place. Rudolph had ridden far already, so against his will a sort of litter was contrived in which he was borne back.

"There sounds the signal!" said George; "and all over the dark heath the men are visible, moving quietly along towards the flag on St. Andrew's Hill. Let us hasten on." The tramping force was soon in full motion through the narrow lanes, till they struck the road about St. Faith's, from which a pleasant view was obtained of their down-hill way by Stratton to Cawston. At Holt they were met by anxious riders, Sir W. Hervey, and his chaplain the parson Colman, with others. Major George addressed them with, "How is it? Have we made our night march in vain, or is there danger?"

Sir William replied, "A force is undoubtedly expected over the Wash,—most likely to-day; so you are none to soon. I hope you may approve of our arrangements."

George answered quickly, "We must not make our stand in the town, and so draw the attack on it. I have been thinking of the bend of the river at Letheringsett."

"Just where we have been preparing," said Hervey, "a breastwork of trees on this side of the river."

Parson Colman then proposed to bring down four large guns, possessed by Holt for firing on feast days, and point them at the foe.

"But, parson," said Sir William, "where is your ammunition?" Replied the parson, "It's true we have no shot at all; but we have powder for two of the guns. Let the gunners but show their lighted linstocks, and fire one gun: it will be all the same in its effect, or perhaps better."

With much laughter, this was agreed to, and parson Colman was empowered to command *the artillery*.

They found the Holt men securely ensconced behind a strong palisade of wood, fronting the little stream, with scouts far away toward the sea, communicating with each other. Hubert and Rudolph joined these, to command their defense. The Major proceeded over the river, with the horse, to throw up an almost parallel barrier on that side, so as to bar the way on both banks. The Norwich footmen soon fashioned for themselves a strong intrenchment behind the Holt troop, a little higher up the hill, where they could easily sit down and be hidden. Above them, also screened by bushes easily removable, were the guns, in *formidable* array! This formation had not long been completed when the word was passed along, as the scouts fell back, "They come!" Every eye was directed along the level road; a cloud of dust was seen, and a distant tramp was heard. By degrees a body of men-at-arms was discerned, with a few mounted officers, and a large scattered body behind in very loose order. They advanced as if with jovial ease and security, until the Knight, who led them, seeing some barrier near the river, halted his men, and went forward with the riding officers to examine into the state of affairs. Supposing the force which he saw was the only opposition, the Knight ordered his men to advance. The old Knight as they neared the water said aloud, "Fellows, what make you here, obstructing the road? Do you mean to oppose our visit to Blickling? Have you any commander, fellows?"

Then Herbert answered, "Sir Christopher Heydon, I answer for my father, Sir William Hervey. We shall not attack you, but we do not mean to let you go to Blickling."

"But," replied the Knight, "we are the stronger party."

Then the hasty Wren shouted out, "Herbert Hervey, I know you for a reprobate friend of my chief enemy. Let us cross the river and tread down the rascals!"

At once the shrill voice of Rudolph was heard, "Ah, Master Green, these were the eggs and pigs you were looking after! If you want more spilt milk, come across!" A laugh was heard, for his story was known.

After conferring a little, the Knight ordered his men to face about and keep on their own side of the stream; when all at once they found the barricade on that side, whose defenders rose to view. Balked again, the Knight prepared to cross the river and keep the road, when suddenly the Major appeared above, and at his word the mass of his men sprang into sight, well armed and steady.

"Heighday!" cried the Knight, "where did you all hail from?"

George loudly answered, "Major George Sherwood, at your service, Sir Christopher!—in command of the Norwich trainband. Instead of waiting for you, we have come to meet you; but we do not attack unless you force your way. A step forward, and we do our worst."

"Come on, my men!" said Wren; "you may leap this brook, and then let's see how they will stand our onset. George, I defy you!"

He and some others dashed into the stream, when, from above, some bushes were pushed away, and four guns, tremendous for that time, were seen, with their open throats full pointed on their advance. The gunners held their linstocks alight. Parson Colman shouted with reverberating voice, "They are crossing the river! Fire!" One gun roared forth, with report loud enough for four. The shots, no doubt, were supposed to whistle over the soldiers.

Then the King's men began to retire on the road. It was too serious and strong a defense to storm, and the fishermen were already slinking away into the byroads, and among the swamps.

At first the foe retreated in soldierly order; but being pressed by the Major and horsemen, they broke and fled, and many were taken prisoners. The mounted officers rode furiously, to reach their vessels; and Wren and Green, with one vessel-load, got away to sea. The stanch old Knight would not leave his men, and had some months' imprisonment in the Castle (while his friends were fighting), affording an opportunity for devising fresh allegories.

Thus satisfactorily ended this attempted invasion of the Eastern Counties. Before leaving for Norwich, George, who had sent on part of his force with the prisoners, spent an hour or two with his happy and exultant friends at Holt. The soldiers were entertained at the market hall; but the noble withdrawing-room of the Hervey's mansion was opened for the friends of the family. Heartily were they received by the ladies,—at first, with feelings overcharged with solemn joy that what might have proved a deadly engagement had been so free of casualty. Rudolph created the first laugh by his remark, "It was a battle without harm, except the poor gunner who burnt his hand in firing the powder, and a few other slight wounds."

The Major, seizing Rudy by the waist, and lifting him on his shoulder, exclaimed in triumph, "This boy deserves praise that might spoil him. His energy has saved the lives of hundreds to-day; and he may even have saved Norwich from surprise."

"Come, George, draw it mild," was Rudy's response. "I don't swallow that. I was only, as Sir Christopher Heydon would say, 'like a carrier pigeon, with a letter under his wing;' and I carried it safely."

"Nay, boy," said his father, "but you did much more. Therefore, I give you this," taking down a fine old military sword, "which your grandfather won abroad. Your sisters shall gird you with it. May you be 'chevalier sans peur et sans reproche!' Be bold, true, and loyal."

The sisters came forward and girded the weapon at the side of the boy-hero with due solemnity, but could not prevent it from trailing on the ground behind the short figure, while his face was all aflame with emotion as they kissed him and bade him grow up a noble man.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE BATTLE OF THE STANDARD.

"When the good man mends his arrow,
And trims his helmet's plume,
When the good wife's shuttle merrily
Goes flashing through the loom,
With weeping and with laughter
Still is the story told
How well Horatius kept the bridge
In the brave days of old."

LORD MACAULAY.

Soon after the events last described, Cromwell sent in haste for the Major and all his available forces, since the King had thrown off the mask, and raised the flag of war at Nottingham.

"The time has now come, Alie," said George, "for stern duty, and I must depart to scenes whence many will never return."

"We who remain at home will have sore hearts, George, and will offer constant prayers till that time," said Alice, looking down rather distantly.

"What is the matter, Alie? I cannot leave you with this chillness between us. You have permitted me the dearest hopes: you will not withdraw them now?"

The tears filled her eyes as she answered, "I did not foresee the cruel changes war would cause. For brothers like Edward and you to turn on each other, and drive each other from home, and from friends, and religious duty! Oh, George, this seems so shocking!"

"It is shocking, Alie,—harder for those who have to act thus than for those who witness it. And to go away and draw the sword and fight with fellow-countrymen—this is very hard! But is it not a duty as sacred in its season as even prayer or benevolence? Alie, look not so cold."

"George, I am not so; but when I see you so changed to Edward, how may you alter to others?"

"Yet I have given Edward better terms than his party would give me. He is free, and will find congenial work as chaplain to the Royal troops. In your sympathies and religious interests you are hardly just, Alie. Stephen Wren misled Edward, but he and you all should have known that bad man better."

"George, I always disliked him, and only tolerated him because I could not help his presence. Even respecting Edward, my sorrow at his going away is much more for a dear friend than for myself. I did not think you would so coolly refuse the request of both May and myself."

George reflected, and his face cleared a little at this explanation, and then said, taking her hand, "Alie, I never had so hard a duty; but if we have misunderstood each other, let us at least part in restored affection."

All answer was silenced in a long and passionate embrace, in which for a time all displeasure was dissolved.

That night Ann had a talk with her mistress, in which she freely expressed her wife-like sorrow at losing Will; and then, pausing, looked at Alice so sad and silent, when she suddenly broke out, "But here am I talking of myself and Will, when I ought to think of you and the dear Major. He will be a woeful man to-morrow,—he is that tender. Why, he has been to our house to comfort me to-day, and so kindly he did talk: 'Now, Ann, don't take on; Will and I will care for each other—we are used to it, you know. You will have Mistress Alice to see after: she will be troubled to lose her two brothers. And tell her that perhaps, should there be a battle, we may send for her and the Lady Gabrielle to nurse the poor fellows, as they did me.'" This did seem to comfort Alice, and in the morning, when the Major started, she whispered, "I know what you said to Ann about nursing the wounded of your soldiers; and mind, I shall be ready at your call." There was a fresh color in her cheek and a light in her eye by which George knew well that her heart had recovered itself again.

The Major was soon fully engaged in the command of his men, horse and foot, through the long rapid march to join Essex, which they did about Northampton. At Huntingdon he met Cromwell, whom he found amid the tender work of farewells to his neighbors, and to his fond wife and pretty daughters. The leave-taking was pious and touching. "Oliver," said his wife, "you will send a courier when you reach head-quarters."

"Surely, dearest wife, if the Lord permit," was his answer. "Now, girls, I must part from my playmates for awhile;"—here he tenderly embraced each. "Take care of your mother; walk closely with your God; pray for us every day while we strive hard for your liberty and happiness." When mounted on his noble horse, and ready to follow the regiment, he took off his broad hat, and, looking up to heaven, said, "The Lord watch between you and us while we be absent one from another. Farewell!" Then striking spurs into his horse, he and the officers galloped away, waving their hats, and leaving behind a weeping, sobbing crowd.

Arrived at head-quarters, Lord Essex received them heartily, surrounded by numerous lords and Parliament-men of the moderate school, who were greatly alarmed at breaking with the King, and hoping for some accommodation. They were constantly depreciating their own side, and magnifying the Royal forces—croaking and dispiriting the troops, and infecting the naturally cautious Essex with a desire to avoid any serious collision. Of such a feeble policy Cromwell soon showed his impatience. "Very unlike Bannier or Saxe-Weimar—eh, George?" he would say, "this dawdling and retreating and watching? Our men will become cowards. Some of the other regiments seem to have little stomach for fighting, and some of our leaders are at heart really with the tyrant." Most of his old friends felt with him, but tried to restrain his bold expressions. Some of the aristocrats, like Sir Faithful Fortescue, despised the extreme leaders such as Cromwell, and their Puritan recruits. They hesitated not to use the most galling sneers, as "psalm-singing hypocrites," or "canting cowards." Cromwell, on the other hand, bluntly declared "there would never be a good time in England till they had done with lords," and that "if he met the King in battle, he would fight him as he would any soldier." Also he said, "Those who had no fear of God would be the first to turn traitors in action." These sayings were reported, and brought on the bold leader much odium. But he was all the more looked up to by the brave and forward spirits as a leader worthy of the time.

The troops retreated before the King as far as Worcester, where the armies lay looking at each other for days, though Essex had a larger force and better artillery. The complaints were so serious that a council of war was summoned. Fortescue, Lord Stamford, and others, spoke of their "untried and hasty levies; the drilled forces of the King; the generalship of the experienced Lindsay; the unrivaled Rupert; the courage and authority of Charles himself. If defeated, the King's way to London was open: we had better continue to watch and wait,—in spite," added Fortescue, "of ignorant civilians who hoped to win battles by their screaming lungs."

On this Cromwell rose, and with great firmness asked, "How long are we to follow the footsteps of the foe? Where are the men to learn practice in arms? How can we tell that the King will not give us the slip, and be in London first?—Not by waiting and watching the King's face to see if he frown or smile shall we do the nation's work. I hate this shilly-shallying policy, and would strike straight and hard. As to singing of godly psalms, it was not found that the Scotch, or the gallant Swedes, were worse fighters for honoring God or caring for their souls. I am for speedy attack, and an end to suspense."

Just then a message arrived that Prince Rupert and Colonel Sandys were already reconnoitering on the other side of the town. Cromwell requested permission to attack them. Essex could not refuse, but sent an adjutant with many impeding instructions. Cromwell soon had his well-appointed troops in readiness, and rapidly marching round the outskirts came on the King's force in flank and rear. After a spirited conflict, the Prince and his troops gave way in disorder. The council was hardly ended when Cromwell and his officers—George among them—returned with the first laurels of the war. Cromwell was impressing on the assembly the urgent need of following up this slight success, when Major Sherwood entered quickly, and whispered to him. "It is even as I feared!" Cromwell exclaimed; "the King has taken advantage of our timidity, and stolen a march on us. This reconnaissance was but a feint to hide the movement,—as perhaps some here knew, as they do all the Royal plans. The King's forces are on the Kenilworth road, nearer than we to London. All depends on our overtaking and stopping their progress."

By forced marches, and leaving a good part of his army on the road, the main body crossed the Royal march at Edge Hill, in Warwickshire, where the first struggle of this terrible war occurred.

"There, George," said Cromwell, as at last the heights were visible, crowned with the other army, and the Royal standard floating in the morning breeze,—"there is the sight I have prayed for ever since our fight at Rheinfeld. Now we shall surely dash at them and hurl them back. But I fear we may let them slip. Essex will be waiting for his stragglers to come up, and Fortescue is watching for the best time to go over to the other side. O God, breathe a spirit of zeal and courage on this tardy host!"

These forebodings were justified, for the two armies stood facing each other all the morning. The King's troops were strongly posted on high ground, and Essex objected to send his men up the slope to attack them. Cromwell, in despair, offered to take the responsibility of the assault.

Fortescue swore that the "Puritan should be allowed to have his way, and if he were cut to pieces, none of them would stir a finger."

Cromwell lifted his hand, saying, "To the Parliament those must answer who are losing the best hours of this precious day." On this Essex, about two o'clock, ordered his artillery to open fire. Meantime a council of war had been held by the King, in which Prince Rupert urged old Lindsay to descend the hill and overwhelm the enemy, who, he said, "were a set of poltroons who would take to their heels so soon as they saw them in earnest." These senseless counsels prevailed, and the opposite army saw with amazement the commanding position abandoned, and the whole host coming to meet them on the level. The King, in full armor, was in the center, with the Earl of Lindsay. Sir Jacob Astley commanded the horse on the left; Prince Rupert on the right. The other army was in line at the foot of the hill, in the broad valley of the Red Horse. On the right Sir W. Balfour commanded; and here were Cromwell and Hampden, and most of their party.

As the King's troops came within range, Sir F. Fortescue fired his pistol as a signal, and his whole division quitted their ground and joined the King. They were received with enthusiastic cheers. This produced a panic on the left wing

of the Parliament army, and no doubt was done by previous arrangement. Then the battle began by Prince Rupert furiously charging the left wing, which had been just thrown into confusion, and which was broken up and pursued into Keinton. There the Prince suffered his men to plunder the baggage for an hour, leaving the battle to go on without him. The main forces of infantry met in the center of the field, under the personal lead of Essex and Lindsay; and the Parliamentary levies showed their steadfast courage, to the surprise of Charles's troops. Their cavalry charged the Royalist center, making for the standard, but was kept off by the brave pikemen who defended it. At length Balfour allowed Cromwell to wheel his regiment on to the flank of the King's men, which enabled him to break up their order, and seize their batteries and entrenchments. He followed up this success by charging the rear of the king's guards, who were making a firm stand; but now, being attacked on all sides, they wavered and gave way. Penetrating to the very standard, Cromwell's force waged a fearful combat for its possession. Sir Edward Varney, the bearer, was supported by several officers, among whom George detected Stephen Wren, fighting fiercely. George himself, with Will Barnard and some of his choice soldiers, attacked them with success. George overthrew Wren, horse and man, who was severely bruised. The standard-bearer was killed. Will, snatching the flag from his dying hand, passed it to his captain.

"Well done, Will!" said his master; "you have deserved promotion, which Essex shall give you for this trophy."

Essex came up and promoted Will, but handed the flag to an officer, from whom it was shortly retaken by a Royalist officer, who was knighted for his daring.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

ST. VALENTINE'S EVE IN NORWICH.

"Hail, day of music, day of love,
On earth below, in air above!
On earth, the postman toils along,
Bent double by huge bales of song,
Where, rich with many a gorgeous dye,
Blazes all Cupid's heraldry—
Myrtles and roses, doves and sparrows,
Loveknots and altars, lamps and arrows!
What nymph without wild hopes and fears
The double rap this morning hears?"

LORD MACAULAY.

It was Valentine's Eve in the good city of Norwich. There is perhaps no place where the saint who presides over human ties of love is more ardently worshiped. Presents are almost universal from all sorts of relatives to each other. Not only that tender mystic tie which is represented by hearts and Cupids is expressed by them; but parents and children, brothers and sisters, and mutual friends, exchange tokens of yearly regard. The gifts are by no means confined to letters of symbolic affection, but are often valuable and useful articles. Great secrecy is observed in preparing them. In the dusk of twilight figures creep about the streets, depositing their parcels outside the doors. Then the knocker or bell is suddenly and loudly made to sound, and the striker rushes away. Within the hall are lurking children and servants, and even elders, hurrying to open the door, so as if possible to catch a glimpse of the departing visitor. Sometimes, however, the gifts are sent by deputy, and then the bearers are asked within to take refreshment.

Even during the time of war these customs were observed, and in some way or other those with the army still received or sent their wonted Valentine offerings. Persons appeared in the old city a little before the time on leave, some of whom returned to camp to perform representative duties there. As the armies were pausing after the engagement of Edge Hill, a good many of George's troop were in Pocthorpe and other parishes. Will Barnard had also made his appearance at home. At this time even some Royalists ventured thither, amid a nest of enemies, in the service of St. Valentine, and were seldom molested.

In the Rector's house the usual preparations were made. There, too, presents were ready to be taken and delivered. Will and Ann were aiding Alice, while the Rector himself was preparing to go out in order to hold a service of thanksgiving and prayer, rather inopportunely arranged by the Parliament for that time. The bell was sounding, and presents arriving, while not a little mirth arose in speculating on the senders.

"That's from father;—yes! and mother promised me that. And here comes the Hopes' messenger!"

"See," cried Ann, "here's a work-case for me! These are from the Allens, from Yarmouth;—how good of them! how pretty! These from the Ridgeleys. See—from the Brightlings, and Taylor, and Hannah Vores! Was ever Valentine so good as to-night? Ah, Mistress Alice,—here's a beauty for you—a London bonnet!"

"That's from the Lady Gabrielle and the Count;—yes, Gerhardt sent them."

"And this fur neck-tie—who is that from?—fastened with a true-love-knot! You know, Mistress Alice. But, goodness! what's that?"—for there was a deafening rap at the door. Two men appeared, bearing large parcels, and disguised in masks. Alice doubted about admitting them in her father's absence; but one of the stranger's presented from Edward a cross richly ornamented with jewels. The other also gave a valuable ring to Alice. They accepted the usual hospitality, and drank to "The Belle of the Eastern Counties." They staid some time, and one whose voice seemed familiar attempted some gallantries which Alice cut short. At length they departed amid much rude merriment, which rather alarmed the ladies. When they left, Ann exclaimed, "Gracious!—one of those grinning fools was our old tutor."

"Yes, Ann; and the other Stephen Wren. What can they be about here? Not merely to bring Edward's presents."

Then Will said, "Powers! if the Major knew they were here, wouldn't he drive them off! But 'tis Valentine's-day, and strangers must be let alone." The presents had about ceased to come, and the ladies were following the Rector to church, leaving Will to guard the house, when two of Will's fellow-soldiers appeared, wanting to speak to him. They told him that something was on foot in Pocthorpe. Some men had been staying there for days, bribing and feasting the men they could get together. Hints had come out, they said, of a design on the Castle, and a great many presents were ready to be conveyed to the guards there.

Alice said, "Can they be going to take these to the Castle and so get in?"

Ann replied, "Why not? Every house will be empty, and the churches filled, in an hour. Some of the Castle soldiers will be already away at your father's meeting, and all they can spare will be at church. There could not be a better time. What can we do?" The young men, when questioned, admitted having been at some of the feasts, and seen arms handed out and arrangements made; but, fearing some trick, they came to Will.

"Now, lads, go you and draw together all you can, and we will meet them on the hill, and settle their business."

"But," said Ann, "before you were ready they would be there."

"Yes," added Alice, "and there would be bloodshed and fright. But, Ann, they won't suspect women. You and I will cover our faces, and take some of these gifts, packed up again, and ask for the Governor, good old Sir Ralph, or his deputy, Captain Fletcher, and put them on their guard."

"You, Mistress Alice!—what would the Major say?"

"Never you mind,—it's a good plan," replied Ann. "We shall be quite safe to-night. Which presents shall I pack?—this fur necktie?—oh, you won't let that go! Come, then, we are ready, and there's no time to lose."

Alice then told Will to give orders to his men to be about on the hill ready for any occasion. If the strangers were refused the entrance, he was to hustle them out of the town as a mere freak, but without provoking any fight. Bearing their parcels, the brave lady and her faithful maid slipped along under the eaves, Anne carrying a lanthorn. They met others similarly engaged, and exchanged merry greetings; but their hearts beat, and they were anxious. As they turned, and got in sight of the Castle gate, on the hill, they saw two things which quickened their pace. There was a cart with several men at the foot making for the Castle, and some of the guard were at the porch ready to issue forth for church. They just managed to slip in before the cart, which traveled slowly, and, passing the guard, begged to see the Governor. He was away at church. The Deputy was some time in appearing, and then would hardly attend to two women. Ann, however, had assailed the officer on duty, and induced him to prevent the exit of the few remaining men. Alice clearly stated what they knew, when the great gates were at once closed,—not a moment too soon.

A knocking was heard, and admission was begged for St. Valentine and his gifts. This would have been readily granted five minutes before; and as only a dozen unsuspicious guards were in the Castle, it might have been seized. Now, however, a smaller gate was opened; and when two or three of the leaders had passed in, the gate closed between them and the rest of their friends who were pressing on. Those within tried still to carry off the jest, and to offer the Valentines; but being examined, they were found armed. Wren and Green were compelled to stand forth in their real character. They, recognizing Alice, expressed ironically their extreme obligation for her concern for them.

Stephen Wren said, "Your friend Edward will thank you, no doubt, for betraying his friends. Still, Mistress Alice, I admire your courage."

"Sir," said Alice, roused, "your admiration is by no means coveted; nor can I in the least admire the skill or success of your disgraceful plots."

"They might have succeeded but for you, lady," interrupted Green.

"Hardly, when you were baffled at Cley by a little boy who spied out your object for seeking eggs and milk among the country people! I wonder you are not weary of being beaten."

A riot was heard outside, and it was seen from the casement that the rest of the conspirators were vigorously attacked from without, and that a fierce battle was going on. The alarm-bell of the Castle was rung, and in all the places of worship there was much agitation. The Castle guard was soon on its return, and dealt with the rioters, driving off the aggressors from the city. When all was safe, Alice and Ann were escorted home by Will and his troop, and by a company of the Castle soldiers; and next day the thanks of the city were publicly sent by a deputation to Alice at her father's house. On Will's return to the army, her courageous feat was also celebrated and praised in the camp. George and Cromwell wrote to beg her to come and meet the Lady Gabrielle, who was already in camp as a nurse of the many wounded. If she assented, they proposed that the Count himself would fetch her. Wren and Green were imprisoned, and sent to Cambridge to be tried there for treason to the Parliament. They contrived, however, to escape on the way, and so survived to do further mischief.

About this time our old Rotterdam friend, Mijnheer Koop came over to Norwich to visit his English daughter, whom he found at the height of fame, and he was not a little proud of her. He was accompanied by his youthful friend Hans Hoboken, still in search of a wife.

After warm congratulations, the worthy man said, "Now, 'van harte gegroet,' *liebchen*, you must tell your father all your secrets and wants. No hope for my young friend, aye? The Major is the man. Well, you must introduce us to your friends. I must find out a good wife for Hans. See, I have brought you the interest of your fortune"—here he offered a large bag of money: "it's yours, and will be yearly transmitted. We have kept up your Homes, and enlarged them. So you can't go back with me now?—going to nurse in the camp? Lady Gabrielle too! Take care of yourselves. Oh, I am so glad to see you again! Veel geluk!"

The good Dutchman made himself most agreeable, and went into all their circles. He courted all the young ladies, while Hans stood by, like a shadow, in silence. Mijnheer even condescended to sound Ann on the subject of a wife for Hans; but she replied, "Can't you leave the young man to himself? You'll never win an English girl by proxy." The old man laughed and shook his head, saying, "She's right, op mijn woord."

The last day they all had together, after the Count's arrival to fetch Alice, and before the travelers started, was Sunday, and it may be well to describe the way in which it was observed.

It was a lovely day when the Rector's family left the house for the morning service. They soon overtook a large party who had come over from Yarmouth (near twenty miles), partly by water, for the enjoyment of the

Lord's Supper together; and after rest and food they were ready for the sanctuary. Alice was walking toward the river, to meet the Ridgeleys, when they encountered the Yarmouth party, among whom were the three Allens, who, with their father, were making Yarmouth their present abode. Cordial welcomes were exchanged.

The simple room was very crowded with the greater part of those who had returned from Holland, and others who were joining them from Sunday to Sunday. Allen aided Bridge in the minister's duties. The whole service was full of zeal and devoutness, and all went way under a holy impression of waiting on God. On reaching home they found some friends who had come in to speak with Bridge.

"Dear sir," said they, "we cannot keep to the old Church any longer. We can hardly understand this Scotch preacher. He says braw for fine, and bonny for good, and bairns for children; and he mouths so, and talks forever of the covenants, and the keys, and the kirk. To-day he abused you for leading the people into schism, and said you ought to be forced to return to exile, for you were doing the work of Satan, and not of Christ."

"Did he, friend?—that was not wise of Master Cunningham. But how many had he to hear him?"

"Why, about twenty; but some of them will not go again, and so I told him, when he replied, in rage, that Parliament would soon be allies of Scotland, and then our Church would be abolished, and their Presbyteries established. I thanked him for warning us in good time."

"This only shows me the need of having a Church of our own with which they cannot interfere. Yet I desire not to make a permanent division, but shall entreat our followers to embrace the first occasion to return to the English Church whenever that shall be duly reformed. I like not to part the national life—though conscience must rule."

"But," said the Count, "you must have a better room,—it was stifling; the people were on the stairs, and blocking the door-way."

"That we are aiming at, and laying by for the purpose every week," replied Bridge. "So the Bible teaches."

Then the old Dutchman said, "I saw a garden and paddock behind the house: could they not be bought, and used for a larger building? Dat is mijn raad."

"Surely; but we are at war, and taxes are heavy, and the men away. We can only do it slowly."

"But I will help you," said Koop; "and many of our Dutch people will do so for love of your daughter."

Then Alice said, "Father, see here is a bag of money which my Dutch father insists on my taking. Let it go for this."

Said the Dutchman, "That is your own. I and Hoboken will buy the paddock and garden. Gaarne!"

"And I," said the Count, "will, with Gabrielle, erect the church, and so try to repay our many obligations to this good Pastor."

In the afternoon, a lecture was given in the old church at St. George's, and Bridge discoursed from the words "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." As he was enlarging on the charity due to the views of others, he suddenly saw the red face and fiery eyes of Dr. Cunningham, the Scotch incumbent, "glowering" at him from the gallery. Bridge concluded, however, by condemning all persecution, ridicule, or ill-treatment of others for religious opinions, when a hoarse voice exclaimed, "The Pairlement sal hear o' ye!—the Pairlement sal cast ye out!" and hurried steps were heard down the gallery stairs. When all was over, no Dr. Cunningham was to be seen.

CHAPTER XL.

PRINCE RUPERT AND HIS PRISONER.

"And I think how many thousands
Of care-encumbered men,
Each bearing his burden of sorrow,
Have crossed the bridge since then.
I see the long procession
Still passing to and fro,—
The young heart hot and restless,
And the old subdued and slow."

LONGFELLOW.

The Count, with Alice and Ann, and with Will in command of his troopers, made their way safely through Suffolk, and heard that the King was seeking to come to terms with the Parliament. The Commissioners were at Colnbrook; the King at Oxford; their own forces at Reading. They were told that Charles had "called God to witness that he desired to stay the bleeding wounds of the country." The Parliament had ordered Essex to suspend hostilities, and requested the same of the King. The travelers pushed on for London, therefore, without fear, and hoped soon to be within its gates. As they drew near, however, they were startled to hear the sound of artillery. Rumors reached them of some action near the capital. At last they learnt that the double-dealing monarch had taken advantage of the pacific disposition of his foes, and of a foggy day, and had advanced, driving them from Reading to Brentford, where a stand was being made.

The countryman who gave them these news, with no little scratching of his head and humming and ha-ing, added, "I've always hearn as how the King can't tell no lie;—seems, howsomdever, not over-safe to trust 'em. He offers peace, and when his enemy has laid his arms aside, then he rushes and stabs him. I fears the Parliament people is caught and cheated this time, like the birds in my field net." Away he went to trim his nets and set his decoys for the feathered songsters, muttering, "I am the King, the bird catcher; my decoys are the Royal Peace Commissioners. Come, come, pretty ones!" he cried, looking up into the air and around on the trees. "Come, Hampden and Pym and Cromwell and Essex: come dine with me,—and then I will wring all your necks for you! Come, pretty ones, come!"

Our travelers smiled much at this scene, and pushed on carefully, having often to evade the approach of Prince Rupert's rapid cavalry, which was scouring the country. Thus driven from their direct road, they found themselves at last advancing right upon a hostile meeting of two large armed bodies. They drew up to await the event, recognizing the Royalists in one large host, and their own party in a much smaller force, with the flags of Hampden and Brooke.

"Our men are there," said Will, "but they will be hard pressed. I wish we could get to them. There goes the mad Prince!—see his reins on the neck of his horse, and spurs in his flanks. There is Cromwell on his white horse, and master and Hampden just behind. Don't fear, Mistress Alice; just dismount, and sit by this tree. Ann will sit by you. I will tell you all. See, they charge!—they stand firm!—Cromwell is down—No, only his horse! —Master finds him another. Now Hollis brings reinforcements; and there is Essex galloping up in mad haste—they have been surprised!—more are coming—only just in time! Now they hold fast!—well fought! They are mixed—ours are pressing on!—'tis a hand-to-hand buffeting. Mercy on us!—the King's people are giving way!—Hurrah!"

It was indeed so: the King's craft was defeated as it deserved to be. They now made haste to enter the City, which was full of terror and confusion, and to reach the Count's quarters at Westminster. Will and his troop went to report themselves and fill their places. The King might be only checked, and might regain the advantage; so the train-bands were mustering everywhere. No one went to sleep in the great City that night, but kept everything packed and ready for escape.

The Lady Gabrielle had just returned from a day of severe labor among the wounded, but she welcomed them with warmest affection. Alice returned with her to the scene of suffering, and her work began. Wounded cases were continually arriving, and at once she took her share. A secret dread of finding her George among those carried in on litters disturbed her at first, but no news arrived of him. Rumor said the King had made many prisoners—some hundreds; and it was feared that they would all be put to death, as found in arms against him.

Late at night the Count appeared, and told his wife that George was one of the prisoners, and the report of their peril was too true; but that Cromwell and others were moving Parliament to threaten the severest reprisals if this barbarity was committed. The lady took her friend aside, and gently broke this terrible grief. Alice trembled and wept, but then said, "I was prepared—I feared it; but God will protect him;—I can do nothing to help him. These poor wounded fellows, too, have wives and children and sorrowing friends. I shall find some comfort in caring for them." And so she did the whole night, till—the fresh cases ceasing to be brought in—she was persuaded by Ann to rest. The faithful servant had seen Will, who told her that, in hurling back Prince Rupert, the Major had gone too far in advance, and, being captured, had yielded his sword to the Prince.

All night the London citizens were enrolling, and in the morning a force of twenty-four thousand marched forth, under the exhortations of their pastors and the blessing of the people, to make their lives the bulwark of their city.

This thrilling scene may at the present day be beheld in one of the great frescoes adorning the walls of the gallery between the Houses of Lords and Commons in the modern magnificent structure in which Parliament meets. Well does it deserve a place there, to stir every future race to imitate the patriotic zeal of their brave ancestors.

Before the morning was fairly come, or Alice had woke, a man entered the adjoining tent, and Ann almost screamed, for it was the Major himself, safely released. He came in softly, and looked tenderly at the pale sleeper, with a tear on her eyelid, which he wiped away. She woke, and scarcely started when she saw him, but returning his embrace, said, "I did trust in God. Oh, what a mercy! How did you escape?"

"By God's singular help, Alie; and not I only, but the other prisoners. I, however, owe my safety first to my dear brother Edward;"—here he paused, for Alice appeared overwhelmed;—"yes, and then to Prince Rupert. The Prince was very generous, and committed me to his orderly, saying, 'Major Sherwood, I knew of your name and distinction in Germany as well as here. I fear your life is in peril, for some of Charles' counselors hope to terrify the Parliament by a stern example at the outset, but we will do what we can.' Soon after I was led away, Edward came rushing to see me. 'Oh, George, how is this? I fear sentence has gone forth;—'tis barbarous, but I will see Lindsay and the King's advisers.' After a few more affectionate words, he left me, but presently returned, sad and pale, saying, 'Dear brother, the King is enraged, for the Parliament have threatened reprisals, and his Council thinks he must not give away.' I tried to quiet him by my submission, but he would not listen. 'Come with me to the Prince. We are good friends, for if war ends soon we are to leave England together for Madagascar, where Prince Rupert was to have been made Governor for an English company if he had not been called away here. He loves to talk of that eastern island; and if you but promised to go with us, I feel sure he would get you off.'

"So we went together, and found the Prince taking a hasty meal—a noble-looking face and the eye of a hawk. 'Well, my chaplain of Madagascar, my Laud of the island!—what! your brother with you? Will he go with us when the war is over? He could be my Strafford, and I would not let him be executed.' 'Your Highness will be pleased to interfere to save him now, and we will both serve you afterward. The King is angry, and will not hear pleading, but he will hear your Highness always.' 'I don't know that. Though not cruel, the King is absolute, and hates rebels; but I like a brave enemy, and your brother is one. I saw him attack the standard at Edge Hill. Stay, I will try!' He returned after awhile laughing. 'Charles positively denied me until I said I wanted him for my Prime Minister in Madagascar, when he smiled, and said, "By St. George! but he'll be your Steenie over again, and you'll never have a will of your own! Send him away privately, but he must not serve against us again." "No," said I, "not for a month; for the war will be over by then, and we can start for the southern isle." So you must be off at once, and promise not to fight us for a month. The others will not get off so easy, though I hear they will escape with life. If they did not, we should be disgraced through the world.' Then I returned with Edward to his rooms, and I never knew him so loving and good. We parted more warmly than since we were boys at home with you, dearest."

"I am rejoiced," said Alice, "that this event, which has cost us all dear, has at least brought you brothers nearer. Edward would gladly repay your generosity to him at Norwich."

"Yes; and, Alie, I was better pleased to find that his presence at the Royal camp has taught him something. He said to me, 'George, to you I may confess that I am sick at heart here. My vocation as a chaplain is fruitless; the army is a band of buccaneers; there is no piety save mere forms, and I cannot produce any. The

cruelty shown to any Puritan clergyman is odious: the soldiers delight in ransacking the home and torturing the family. Their hatred to the Puritans is diabolical. They plunder wherever they have the opportunity. The swearing, gambling, and licentiousness are horrible; and the officers are as bad as the men. They die reckless, as they live wanton. The Prince is a true gentleman—brave and chivalrous, but impetuous; and he knows the King will one day cast him over, like all his instruments. The trickery of the Court—the levity and extravagance—the haughty, unbending arbitrariness of the King, who cannot brook even the Parliament of his own friends in Oxford—the shameful treachery, such as you have just experienced in the foul attack on Brentford during peace negotiations—the domination of the Queen and her Popish advisers—oh, George, my loyalty and piety have been fearfully tried! But I must do my best for awhile where Providence has placed me. Perhaps some day a sphere of quiet holy work for men's real welfare may be given me. How gladly would I settle down to it!' After much communing, we cordially embraced and parted; but we are real brothers again now."

"God be praised!" said Alice; "I knew your true nobility would show itself in both at last. But, George, we have been in sore trouble about you. If I knew not before yesterday, I found how entirely I am yours. Oh, George, if we had been parted!"

"You give me the sweetest consolation, my dear heart. I too realized the anguish; but of late, amid battles and deaths of friends I have seemed every morning to yield my life to God, and with it my fondest prospects. I have got the habit of falling back on the heavenly reunion; so that should we be parted here, we may not despair."

That day the city of London was in fearful peril, but her citizens showed such spirit, and presented so bold a front, that the king's army at length retreated. Hampden and Cromwell and Hollis, to whom the brave stand was due, earnestly besought permission to send a strong force of cavalry to the rear of the enemy, in order to cut off their line of withdrawal. This body had formed, and was actually on the road, when orders came from Essex not to divide his force. They had to see the King retreat unmolested. Cromwell was almost ungovernable at this bad generalship, which he called treachery.

Hostilities now paused, and George escorted Alice and the Arenbergs to Norwich, where Cromwell came shortly to rejoin them. A grand reception was given in the good city to Cromwell, and Lord Grey of Walk, as heads of the "Eastern Counties Association for Defence," in the St. Andrew's Hall. Dr. Hope was chairman. The new clergy, with many of the chief citizens, formed a fine assembly. Count Arenberg, long esteemed in Norwich as the Fleming, and his lovely lady, of whom romantic accounts had been spread;—old Alderman Sherwood and his popular son;—Bridge, the foremost theologian and religious leader in the city, with his fair daughter Alice, who had lately saved the Castle and nursed the wounded soldiers;—all contributed to the interest of the occasion. Cromwell received boundless applause as he spoke of the reformation of religion, and the successful resistance to civil tyranny, as the great objects of the Parliament, and praised the worthy citizens for their steady support. He felt that God had called him forth from the family and retirement he loved. Having put his hand to the plow, he did not mean to look back, lest he should prove not worthy of the kingdom of Heaven. His strong decision and bright manly hope and ardent faith lit up his face with heroic splendor, and reflected themselves in the responsive countenances of all his hearers. On the Sabbath Cromwell worshiped with Bridge's congregation. He also met George's band of men and others (many being unable to find room) for a very remarkable Bible reading, in which his noblest qualities came fully out.

In the evening a large society gathered in Alderman Sherwood's house, where Cromwell was staying, in which much sweet music and pleasant converse was discoursed. A great deal of interesting conversation ensued between the Count, Cromwell, George, Sir W. Hervey, and Alderman Sherwood on the state of affairs at home and abroad.

In the course of the evening Cromwell took his seat beside Alice and May, who, as usual, were together. "Sweethearts, you recall to me my dear Bridget, Frances, Elizabeth and Mary. Would they were here! I should like you to know them. I miss them daily. The Lord provide for them! You, my love," addressing Alice, "are, I know, a choice friend of my brave and good Captain yonder. He has been my right hand; and it was a noble act of his brother, who is on the other side—was it not my dear?" slyly addressing May,—"to win his brother's release. If ever I can do him a good turn I will. And for you too, young ladies;—now what can I do for you?"

As he paused, Alice replied, "bring this horrid war to a speedy end, Colonel; for it parts families, and prevents——"

"Marriages! you would say," interrupted Cromwell. "Well, to tell you a secret, I have a daughter only waiting for peace to be happy with one of my captains; so you see I have my own reasons for making short work. I assure you I have done my best. But, Mistress Alice, did you like Holland? I hear you gained great love in Rotterdam."

Cromwell was introduced to the Herveys, whom he knew well by report. He had heard of Rudy's exploits from George. "So," said he, "you are the boy to ride your thirty miles, detect spies by their love of eggs and milk, and drive off an enemy by guns without shot,—and yet you have no sword!"

"Pardon, General," Rudy broke in with; "but I have—my grandfather's,—won under King Gustavus Adolphus; and I'll serve under you when you've done marching up and down, and begin to fight in good earnest."

This pleased Cromwell mightily, who laughed, and said, "That's right. I don't know but you may be grown up before we know how to go straight at our enemy's face. When we do, I'll let you know."

"All right, General," was Rudy's reply.

When he had retired, George and Alice lingered awhile to chat. "Now, Alie, what think you of my great friend?"

"Why, George, he is several men in one: a godly man, and a man of the world; a man of passion, and yet calm; a father, and a general; superior to most, he can yet condescend to all; with a great deal of Heaven and much of earth in the composition of his nature."

Ann happened to pass through the room, and she said, "Yes, indeed, he has a notice for every one;—as he passed this morning through the hall where I was sweeping, he looked kindly at me, and said, 'My girl, hast swept out thy inner chamber this morning? We should all do that the first thing of all,'—and so he went into the garden. Will says he is full of such queer words, which make the soldiers think; besides, he has a store of jokes and stories, which they love. But he can be serious. No man dares confront his anger: his angry eye is terrible."

CHAPTER XLI.

DIVINITY, LOVE, AND STATECRAFT.

"Now there was made fast by the tower's wall
A garden fair, and in the corners set
An arbor green with trellis long and small,
Railed around, and so with bushes set.
And therewith cast I down my eyes again,
Where I saw walking underneath the tower
The fairest and the freshest maiden flower
That e'er I saw, methought, before that hour;
At which quick stroke at once did start
The blood of all my body to my heart."

KING JAMES I. OF SCOTS.

A SUMMONS had come to call Bridge to attend the sittings of the Westminster Assembly of Divines. In company with his wife and daughter, and of the Count and Countess, with May Hope, whom Gabrielle had induced her father to part with for a time, they arrived in London in the summer. The Count had purchased a large estate on the confines of Westminster, with a mansion of ample dimensions, in which room was found for the whole party. In the grand hall of this mansion a meeting was held of the more liberal members of the Assembly, who were to proceed together to the opening of one of the wisest and most pious gatherings of holy men ever held under the confession of the supremacy of Holy Scripture. William Bridge, Thomas Goodwin, Sydrach Sympson, Philip Nye, and Jeremiah Burroughs, who attended it, were afterward called the Independent brethren in the Assembly, and took a prominent and important part.

At this meeting two things were specially proposed by Bridge—first, that care be taken to have passages of Scripture produced on which to found every conclusion; also, secondly, respecting the Scotch Covenant which that nation desired to force on the English, Bridge desired that it should be delayed as long as possible, and then modified. After long conference, they proceeded to Westminster Abbey, where Dr. Twiss, the Prolocutor, preached. The members, each and all, solemnly swore to "maintain nothing but what they believed in conscience to be truth, and to conduce most to the glory of God and the good and peace of His Church."

As this vow was being discussed, Selden observed to those round him, "What simplicity such a promise shows among these ecclesiastics! The first hot discussion must break it, for each disputant will strive for mastery."

"Who would believe us in the Commons," said Pym, "if we swore a hundred such oaths?"

Whispered Rudyard, "These ecclesiastics like to assume the aspect of the dove or the lamb, but none the less they hide the craft and sting of the serpent."

Milton added, "As for the peace of the Church, the Scots are ready to persecute Episcopalians and Independents. These last alone profess to tolerate opponents;—may they have grace to do so!"

"Parliament," said Selden, "should have resolved, before pulling down an old edifice, what it would build in its place." To which all assented.

In the course of a few months this venerable Assembly made great progress in sending good ministers into various districts, and settling the doctrine and practice of the Church. Bridge, throughout, took a very leading part in its discussions, and was highly honored for the acute logic, grave learning, and especially the excellently restrained temper of all his arguments.

At a united gathering in St. Margaret's Church, the Solemn League and Covenant was adopted by the lifting up of hands. This service filled the day, there being three sermons of an hour long, and several prayers of about the same length. Then began the deliberations on Christian doctrine and Church government, in which Bridge did not hesitate openly to avow and defend his new-found opinions. The first struggle for the Independents was "whether the word of God contains a rule," which position they steadily maintained throughout with skill and courage against Episcopalian and Presbyterian divines, though usually these brethren were in a small minority. This Assembly has met with hard usage since the Restoration, yet it composed a Catechism of Divinity and a Directory of Worship which have been of great service in cherishing Scriptural religion both in Scotland and England.

Many visitors attended the sittings of the Assembly, who found room in the side aisles, and were screened from observation. Not a few members of Parliament, with clergy of the old Church, looked on with indifference or contempt, and rejoiced in the hot divisions which often arose. The Count and his ladies were often there, and Milton with them, whose caustic and brilliant sayings often got reported by Selden and others for the entertainment of the members.

In this grave Assembly, one day appeared also a fine tall young man, with pale and rather olive tint, high forehead, sparkling eyes, and quick manner, who was very attentive to Lady Gabrielle. This was none other than Dr. Edward Sherwood, divested of canonicals, though in a grave habit. He was in London as *attaché* to an embassy from the King sent to treat of peace. At that time the affairs of the Parliament were at the lowest ebb. They had lost Hampden by a shot of Prince Rupert's troopers on Chalgrove field. Pym, also,—the King Pym, so long the fast pillar of English liberty,—had passed away. Meantime negotiations were also renewed between the combatants; and thus Edward appeared in town, and the Lady Gabrielle took a great fancy for him. Edward was much interested in the discussions going on, and criticised them with learning and wit, only that his learning rested more on the Fathers than on Scripture.

The Countess one morning said to him, "We have some livings on our new estate, and I want some suitable married clergymen."

"Then," said May, playfully, "Edward cannot apply to you,—his vow of celibacy is an old story."

"Not so," said Edward, looking unusually full at her, "my fair enemy: foolish vows melt in the sun of truth."

"What!" cried May, "is Benedict's icy mood thawing?—Pray, who is the Beatrice?"

"No doubt Edward will find out a lady when he takes the pains to seek," said Gabrielle with emphasis; "but you have had enough of these thorny disputes, and I want to drive to the village of Heston, in our property, where is an ancient church and a charming rectory which I wish to examine. May, you will go with me? Master Milton promises me his company. My good husband is too much interested in the Assembly. The *attaché* perhaps will give us his escort?—and, if so, will please to see after my carriage. Will you, pray, Dr. Sherwood?"

They were soon rolling away in a roomy coach over roads not very smooth, but in fresh air and through smiling country.

"Friend Milton," said the Lady Gabrielle, "such a ride reminds me of your graceful poem in the volume which you gave us abroad, and which is still my favorite:—

"Sometimes walking, not unseen,
By hedge-row elms, and hillocks green,
Right against the eastern gate
Where the great sun 'gins his state."

"And I recollect your beauteous pictures," added May, "of the whistling plowman, the singing milk-maid, the mower, and the shepherd. Here around us are all your images, fresh and real."

"Then, sir, you are the author," said Edward, in an ecstasy, "of my select lines,—

'But let my due feet never fail
To walk the studious cloisters pale.'

The author of those lines must have the true ecclesiastical reverence in his soul, and be a real priest. I am profoundly happy, sir, to know you."

"I fear, young gentleman, you might be disappointed did you know me better," answered the poet. "There is little of the ecclesiastic about me, and less of the priest; yet I love the all embracing flock of the gentle and celestial Shepherd. But, lo! yonder I see a lovely sight,—a gray church tower, ivy clad to the summit, with its well-trimmed God's acre, and quaint parsonage. Is that the goal of our journey? A poet could desire none more lovely in such sweet company."

Something seemed to have thrown a softening spell over the party. They found a little maid waiting with the keys, and followed her. The church was handsome and roomy, and the girl said it was "throng o' Sundays." Here amid the old pews the Countess walked with Edward, while Milton talked in his grand and rich style to May. "Doctor Sherwood," said the Lady Gabrielle, "I have practiced a *ruse* on you in bringing you here. I want you to be my clergyman here. I heard of your excellent work in Norwich specially from my young friend May, who was eloquent on the subject."

"But, lady, I am rather a stiff Episcopalian. Is it likely the present rulers would allow the appointment of one so connected with the Court? Would it not perhaps seem base in me to accept it?"

"I would not wish it except with their consent," replied the fair interrogator; "but I am known to the Court, and you have connections on both sides. The Parliament are glad to wink at the employment of reputable men, even though the old service is used."

"I may confess, lady, that my heart has been longing for such a position, free of party strife, where I might labor without fear of persecution in religious work, and hope for better times."

"Well, I leave the subject now; but the living and parsonage are ample for the respectability of a clergyman and his family."

"Must he be a married man?"

"Nay,—yet I think it would be better. Let us come and look at the house."

The Countess now turned her attention to the poet; and Edward, in a reverie, walked with May, in the full sunshine, through the gate into the pretty garden. Here met them the varied colors and rich scents of a country garden of the olden time.

May paused at the gate, and involuntarily recited Milton's lines,—

"Hard by, a cottage chimney smokes,
From betwixt two aged oaks,
Where Corydon and Thyrsis set
Are at their savory dinner met
Of herbs and other country messes,
Which the neat-handed Phyllis dresses,
And then in haste her bower she leaves,
With Thestylis, to bind the sheaves."

As Edward looked at her, set in the frame of this rural beauty, glancing slyly at him with a beaming look, the thought struck him how happy a man might be in such a sphere,—another Corydon and Thyrsis,—with such a daily companion. This gave an assiduity to his attentions, and meaning to his accents, which awoke in her peculiar content, quieting her usual sallies of mirth and sarcasm, and bringing their hearts nearer together than in years of former intimacy. The crafty Countess, as she stole a distant look, appeared quite satisfied with the state of matters, and still more absorbed herself in the poet's lofty musings. They walked through the pretty house,—lounging in the rooms, and speculating on their uses, and the way to fit and furnish them.

As they lingered alone in one lovely boudoir-room with bay-window, looking on the lawn and garden, with distant orchard and hills, Edward, sighing involuntarily, said, "God's servant would be almost too lapped in ease and happiness here. Home would rival Heaven."

Instinctively the maiden said, "Surely, so it ought. But this would be the lady's room;—she at least would need some rest and beauty after laborious visits to the sick, and anxious comfortings of the sorrowful."

"Dear May, can you sympathize with such a life—you a townswoman with ample means, fond of a bustling existence, with only an indulgent father to care for, and all the best society of an intellectual city at your command? In former times you always seemed to oppose my practical aspirations."

A tear stood in her eye as she replied, looking gently at him, "The heart sometimes veils itself lest it should reveal too much. A true friend must be known by fidelity as well as by sympathy. I think I have been such, Edward."

"Indeed you have," replied the ecclesiastic, whose eyes were fast opening. "I have always felt, dear May, that though perhaps I have not quite understood you, I have loved you; but I taught myself to despair. Nay, even now I can hardly realize in you the quizzical, amusing girl who made me often shrink from her wit. I never saw you as you are now—so sweet and serious. I am tempted to ask——"

"Edward, I too," she exclaimed, nervously interrupting, "never saw you as you are now, so warm and reasonable. You never let me see this pleasant side, whatever others saw. Ask what you will!"

"Then, dearest May," he began, taking her willing hand,—but need I tell what he asked, or what she gave, in that pretty room that autumn day?

They waited so long that the Countess returned. Then Edward briefly explained, and May, full of joy, received her friend's embrace. They hastened to the carriage and drove home,—two of the company very mute, except stolen looks and instinctive sympathies are allowed to be a language.

The poet Milton was very eloquent on "the sacred influence of religion in spreading homes of love and light, and causing children to be reared under the gentling power of experienced instructors, and on spreading the spirit of real chivalry in the treatment of the weak, and the adoration of woman, as the sun and central orb of the whole social sphere." He had no personal reference whatever, nor did he at all comprehend the Eden which had just opened on a new Adam and Eve before him. They, however, blushing crimson, looked on each other, and realized that sort of self-adoration of chivalry which so rapidly grows up and intensifies human love. The Countess kindly made herself unobservant and blind.

On reaching home, the Count came to receive them, saying, "You have had a lovely day. Did the old church look well? What do you think of the parsonage? Rather old-fashioned and gloomy? I fear it must be pulled down."

They were already to protest against his threats, and spoke with enthusiasm of the dear old place."

May seeing Alice in the door-way, rushed to her, and they vanished to some secret refuge, where in a few words the whole blissful secret was revealed, and the two friends wept, laughed, and teased each other to their hearts' content.

Then the Count laid his hands on his wife's shoulders, and said, "I fancy I see that my dear love has prospered in her kind and cunning plans. Her plots and snares have succeeded. It is a real case of suppressed love brought to avowal."

"I believe it is. You know we suffered from that disease, and we ought to help others over it."

"So the old parsonage will do?"

"Touch it at your peril! It is hung with fairy cobwebs, and furnished with pictures of imagery. Even Milton's poems were flat to me compared with this lyric of true love."

In the latter part of 1644, the Count and Colonel George (now an English Colonel for his gallant services at Marston Moor) were conversing in the private library of the former.

"My friend," said George, "I know a soldier must endure hardships; but I thought myself so sure of Cromwell's love,—it is a grievous blow."

"How has it come about, think you?" replied the Count. "You seemed to suit each other, and your energy has been of such service to him."

"He has gradually cooled since Ireton courted his daughter, who yields to him in everything. Now, I have sometimes been constrained to differ from him. Then he has fallen more and more into the strained employment of passages of Scripture, specially the harsh dictates of the old prophets, which justify bloody measures, and I cannot follow these fanatic usages."

"I am glad you cannot, George. Not so our Orange, nor Gustavus Adolphus, who, godly as they were, were also modest, and did not imagine themselves inspired of God and infallible in judgment."

"That, too," said George, "is, alas! another point of difference; for Cromwell interprets every notion which comes across his mind in prayer as a message from God, and regards himself as peculiarly raised up to convey God's purposes to others. His chief military advisers so regard him, or profess to do so; but though I also hold him to be an important instrument for England's elevation, yet I fear his becoming despotic. Already he uses small courtesy in setting aside the convictions of others."

"Alas, George, these have been the snares for commanding genius ever since Mahomet and Joan d'Arc. But Cromwell seems to blend such sound sense and human goodness with his convictions."

"He does so, and he is truly lovable when not thwarted in these directions. But he has met with so much treachery from the King, and from his own party, jealous of him, that he is suspicious even of his nearest friends. I have not escaped, and there are those who have gladly tried to sever us. This feeling was first awakened when my brother saved me by his influence with Prince Rupert. But when that odious Wren crept over here, as known to his son Richard, and brought messages from Edward to you, then Cromwell said to me, on the eve of Marston Moor, 'George, there is too much traffic between your house and the Court. Wren tells my Richard the strangest things. We have had Waller's plots, and Lilburne's; but if I thought—— By Heaven, I am ready to cut off a right hand for the cause!' All I said went for little; but when in the battle we rode side by side, cutting down Rupert's best cavalry like ears of corn with the reaping-hook, he cried out, 'Faith, George, you are my right hand still, spite of them all. God be praised!'"

"Then how has all gone wrong again?" asked the Count.

"Well, since then the jealousies in the army are worse. Cromwell thinks Essex a disguised Royalist; and even his leal friend Manchester he has abandoned since the second battle of Newbury, where he refused to pursue the King. The shameful capitulation of Essex, cooped up in Cornwall, affords the occasion for inquiry. Cromwell holds all these aristocrats to be traitors. He urges a complete reorganization of the army on a new model. In all this he is mainly right, and the army is with him."

"In all such censures of the lax prosecution of the war," observed the Count, "we and you no doubt go heartily with Cromwell. So there is no ground of difference."

"But," said George, "he and his officers, in their impatience, are resolved on shelving all the present leaders, without distinction. Instead of bringing charges in a regular way, they have a rough-and-ready sort of intrigue, by which Parliament is to be induced, on plea of noble self-denial, to declare all its own members, whether Lords or Commons, incapable of holding military office."

"Ah!" exclaimed the Count, "a notable device; but of course they foresee that the innocent suffer with the guilty, and that they exclude themselves."

"Of course that, Count, is the cheese in the trap. The self-denial of Cromwell in proposing

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the plan will make it popular. But there is an understanding that, having passed it, and got rid of Essex, Manchester, Waller, and others indirectly, Sir Thomas Fairfax is to be Lord-General, Skippon Major-General, and the Lieutenant-General I need not name. These generals will be employed on plea of the impossibility of doing without them. Now there is a crookedness about this scheme which I cannot sanction. I ventured to suggest that it would be an ill-precedent, likely to give its proposers a bad name when they were found exempt from it; while the regular course of a trial before the Grand Committee, though slower, was the constitutional method. Cromwell heard me impatiently, drumming the table with his fingers and yawning. Then, he said, in great heat, 'The Lord has revealed to us the way of deliverance, and shall this young Elihu, with his smooth speeches, turn us back? I will have none in my Council who hanker after royalty, and keep terms with the Court. Colonel Sherwood, I love you as a brother, but we are not agreed on the one thing needful. In the new modeling of the army, I will get Fairfax to accept you and your regiment; so we shall not clash. Farewell, old friend.'

"I explained, and protested, but he was immovable, and we are now separated. Fairfax receives me with great cordiality. I shall no doubt have an easier course; but my heart is sore, not only for myself, but for my country, in the fear that her greatest man may be corrupted by power."

"My dear friend, it is perhaps wonderful he is no worse. Think of his great and rapid rise! He will have his checks, and will learn by stern experience. I grieve for you; but I believe in the next battle you will win him again, when he sees you as ardent as ever for England. After all, that is his heart's passion."

"It is," said the Colonel, "and even now he may not be as safe as he thinks. Already there is talk of impeaching him, and the enmity created by this Self-denying Ordinance—the worst of his offenses—will be terrible. The reaction will come; he may be displaced, or even imprisoned."

"No, I do not believe it; his object is so right, that the means will be condoned. To throw over the unsuccessful generals, and make way for the fortunate ones, in war will always find approbation. I saw Milton yesterday, who had heard something of the state of matters. He said: 'Like the forest lion, he has his rough work to do; he must have night work as well as day work. It may be better for his friends to be at a distance from him than too near. He must be somewhat solitary in his walks.'"

"Yes, that is true. I have enjoyed his bosom confidence; I must submit to the weaning. Heaven help his noble aims! But there is peril around him, and snares are lurking to spoil his inward goodness." After further expressions of sympathy had been exchanged, the Count had to leave.

Alice, with the Countess, one day came in haste with an open letter, to seek an interview with George. "Dearest George," said Alice, in great excitement, "troubles never come alone. Here is a vile letter from that wicked fellow who haunts my life. It is full of horrible threats. Oh, George, if anything should take you from me now!"

"Now, Alice," said the Countess, "you promised me to be calm. Let me read the vile production."

"Sweet Mistress Alice,—Though you were so bitter to me, I love you as I like poison, and mean to stick to you. I hate your George. He has always opposed me—too successfully! Already I have done him an ill-turn with his great chief. What sport to chaff these stupid Roundheads! And so you told me you would not see me again! I don't know that, for I have many ways of appearing when I am not expected. But I can meet your friend, and spill his heart's blood—and that's what I mean to do, mistress! When his long face is out of the way, others may have a chance—at all events, he shall never marry you—so order your *deuil* if you will, but not your *trousseau*.

"Your ill-disposed lover,

"STEPHEN WREN."

"The odious scapegrace!" said George,—"all because I upset him at Edge Hill. What a reptile he owns himself to be! Never fear, my sweet Alice."

"But, George, I do;—I have a shiver at his name, and it sticks to me that he is our evil genius. Oh, God, watch over our pure love!"

"Alice, coz," said the countess, "be hopeful! — my husband will lodge information against him. And as for the risks of war, they are open and manifold. Our George has been protected as yet, and will be alway."

"Yes, but an assassin—a murderer!"

"Pooh!" said George, "he means not that,—he cares too much for himself. Our meeting even on the field is very unlikely."

"My beloved George, you are so noble, even when others are ungrateful to you,—when even Cromwell is unjust!" Here she fondly embraced her lover, and the Countess sorrowfully turned and left them.

Their interview was long and tender. They tried to scan the future. George thought the war would soon take a decided turn, and could not doubt the King's defeat. Then there would be peace, and they could be free to settle down near Norwich. Sometimes they would have to be in Rotterdam, since good old Koop had died, and left all his fortune and mansion (after endowing the Homes) to Alice, who had thus become a great heiress. England's future, and their own, seemed promising and roseate,—another battle or two would suffice. Wren's malice was quite forgotten;—they enveloped themselves in the warm covering of divine faith and human affection, and took refuge under the wings of Jehovah.

Some time after these conversations, the Parliament had formed itself into a Grand Committee to consider the condition of the army. There was a pause, and all parties looked at one another for the first move, when Cromwell rose, saying, "It is now time to speak, or forever hold the tongue. The dying nation can only be saved by casting off all lingering delays. What does the nation say? That members of both these Houses have good places and commands, and mean to keep them by lingering on the war. What I say to your faces, is only what the world says behind your backs. There is one sure remedy—it is for every man to *deny himself* and his private interests, and do what Parliament orders for the public good. I can answer for my soldiers and myself to render such obedience."

Amazement sat on all faces at such an address, the meaning of which was made plainer when one Tate, member for Northampton, moved the Self-denying Ordinance, "that no member of either House should hold a command in the army, or any civil office." This sweeping measure was felt as an affront by the previous generals, whom it displaced. Its opponents met at Essex House, and considered whether they should impeach Cromwell, but they missed their opportunity. The other party pressed the great measure on, saying "their victories in the past had been put into a bag full of holes." The Lords at first threw out the proposal, but in the end the necessity of the case carried the day. Cromwell was not yet appointed, but Fairfax soon called for his services in the West, while the Parliament suspended the ordinance in his case—for forty days in the first instance, and very soon entirely. That was a grand winter's work.

CHAPTER XLII.

NASEBY VICTORY.

"Ah, then there was hurrying to and fro,
And gathering tears and tremblings of distress,
And cheeks all pale which but an hour ago
Blushed at the praise of their own loveliness;
And there were sudden partings, such as press
The life from out young hearts, and choking sighs
Which ne'er might be repeated: who could guess
If ever more should meet those mutual eyes,
Since upon night so sweet such awful morn could rise?"
BYRON.

OLD Norwich once more becomes the scene of our story. The good father of George and Edward had for some time appeared to decline in health. Dr. Hope anxiously watched the growing symptoms of heart disorder, and at length felt it right to send an intimation to his friends that as soon as possible they should return. The Westminster Assembly had closed its sittings, so the Rector Bridge was anxious to be among his flock. The Count and Countess also came with him. The King had now quitted Oxford, so that Edward, having no chaplain's duty to detain him, felt it right in George's absence to hasten to his father's sick chamber. Having obtained his discharge, he arrived, and became the greatest comfort to the whole circle under the new feelings of charity by which his nature was softening. Dr. Hope welcomed him as a son.

Alice and May were conversing over these matters while Edward was with his father in the next room. "Dearest Alie, who would have thought, when we last talked in this room, and Edward so ill, that my despair—for such it was—would so soon be all changed into delicious assurance?"

"I assure you, dear May, that I was then little less troubled, for I feared this war was severing George from me;—and what would life have been then!"

"How much we both owe to the good Countess! How clever she is in all perplexing cares! How gracious also has Providence been!"

"If this war is soon ended, May, and all we love are safe,—oh, the fear I have in my heart sometimes!—there would be no hindrance to our happiness."

Here they ceased to talk in words, but spoke by caresses and loving looks their mutual relief.

Edward entered, and Alice left to return home. When she was gone, he said of her, "There goes my faithful sister, to whom I owe more than I can express; and I hope I don't hurt you by saying so, my own May?"

"So far from it, that I echo your words. She and George have preserved me from much misery; and you also, Edward."

"Me!—I was utterly blind. George would have been good as gold to me at school and after we left; but I let myself be drawn away by that vile Green, and the viler Stephen."

"What has become of him, Edward?"

"Oh, as for Green, I know not nor care about him. Wren is still notorious in the army as the loosest, most reckless libertine among the Cavaliers. I am sorry to say that he hates George, and swears he shall never marry Alice. I have begged some of the officers of his regiment to watch him, and prevent any foul play. Probably he will drink himself into his grave."

While the family were nursing Alderman Sherwood, one morning a sound of horses' feet was heard near the house, and the Colonel was observed with a troop who had ridden hard. After dismounting, he told them he had got leave to visit his father, but he must soon return, as a battle was expected directly. It was needful to prepare his father carefully, and then it was pleasant to see the evident delight of both in this unexpected interview. The two brothers greeted with a cordiality the warmer from the long and painful estrangement. George soon inquired for Alice, and hastened to her father's. It was a joyful surprise for her, and she could not preserve her usually calm exterior, but received him with passionate words and flowing tears. "Oh, my dearest, you are still alive! It is my fear by, day and my dream at night! Do you know, George, I had a wondrous dream last night! It seemed to me that you came to me with a crown of victory on your head, and arrayed in splendid robes. You looked so bright and triumphant, and kissed me, saying, 'Alie, the battle is won!—the feast waits! Are you ready?' Then I looked at my common dress, which looked so shabby compared with yours, and with a great pang at my heart I answered, 'Love, I am not ready.' I saw the open porch of a glorious palace close at hand, and within it a house of crystal, with rare plants and flowers growing luxuriantly under shelter. There was spread a vast and magnificent feast-table, covered with dainties and sparkling plate. At the top I saw a golden chair and canopy for the king. The numerous and richly-clad guests were pressing through the porch to take their seats. The trumpets blew from time to time their stirring fanfare. Many friends beckoned for us to enter. My heart was so wistful to join them! I never saw any scene on earth so delicious. I pressed you to precede me, and keep a place there for me. I thought you beckoned an attendant, who drew me aside to make me ready. This attendant presently turned into Ann, and she hurried my preparations, and threw a bride's veil right over me. I said, 'Ann, I cannot go in this,—it is for a bride.' 'Oh, mistress!' she said, 'don't be shamefaced;—he is waiting to marry you!' Then I knew it was for my wedding with you, George; and I was expecting you to lead me into the glorious palace,—when I suddenly awoke, trembling yet comforted. Now, George, what can that mean, think you?"

"Mean, Alice?—why, that we shall win a glorious victory, and we shall be married amid joy and triumph."

"Perhaps so," said Alice; "yet was there

something of mystery more celestial than earthly in the vision. God forgive me for my unbelief! It is sweet to see and feel you here, and to know this is no dream; but oh, how easily you might be struck down at a blow!"

"Alie, dear heart, do not distress yourself, the danger must be faced; I feel it for you more than myself. You will gladly hear that Cromwell and I have been together frequently, and are more on our old terms. Have you heard of any suitable house and property?"

"Yes, lawyer Taylor advises an estate near Cossey, where is a large hall, rather old-fashioned, and a good park."

"I hope the house is near enough to your father's church, for I want to continue his helper. I will gladly lay down sword and helmet when England is free, and be Christ's soldier in the humblest office."

"Now, dear George, let us go back to your house. When must you go away?"

"Alas, Alice! this very night; but soon, very soon, I hope we meet not to part."

So they returned, and found the Count and Countess and Alice's father arrived to welcome George.

George saluted the Countess with emphatic regard. "Gracious lady, we all have to bless your entrance into our circle; and now you have aided to restore Edward to us, and to make him so happy. You have the charmed art of disentangling perplexities."

"If so," she smilingly replied, "I have learnt it from my husband. I was a bundle of tangles till he untwisted them with his patient fingers."

"Should there be a decided victory, what would happen then?" asked Alice's father, turning to general subjects.

"Much will depend," said the Count, "on whether the King lives or dies: though it be sad to say so, the latter would be easier for the nation. His son might ascend the throne and unite the people under a compromise between monarchy and popular claims. If the King lives, I have small hope of any improvement under him. Who will trust his promises?"

"But," said Alice, in whose remark the ladies joined, "we are bound to pray for the King's life. 'God save the King!' is a sacred expression of loyalty."

George replied, "There is a considerable part of the army who, though they would gladly see Charles out of the way, yet hope, if he be a defeated captive, to set round him counselors who shall compel regard for his subjects' privileges. Cromwell is of this party. There are a few who would arrest him as a criminal, and try him on a capital charge of having injured the realm, murdered his subjects, and systematically broken the laws." The Countess and the ladies, together with the Count, expressed their horror of this idea.

"Could he not be exiled," said Bridge, "as he has exiled others?"

"The question would be by whom to replace him here. He would be in France or Germany, fomenting plots for his return, with which a large part of the nation would sympathize."

"Some of Cromwell's immediate friends," observed George, "are for a Republic, with no King, like the governments of Holland, Switzerland, and the Italian cities; and I believe they think Cromwell would make a glorious President of such a Commonwealth."

"But," inquired the Count, "would the aristocracy and the princely families of this nation ever give in to the sway of a civilian without any connection with the royal family of Europe?"

"I know not," George replied; "but a victorious army, and one which, like its leader, regards itself as God's special instrument, will have considerable weight in the settlement. Besides, it is full of levelers, who think Christian saintship a better title to real rank and power than the highest patent of nobility."

"I can desire," said the Count, "nothing better for England than a Republic. It were better for you to choose one of noble birth for a leader, if possible, than a man of the people; but military dictators are not always bad rulers. Who knows what high qualities Cromwell may reveal?"

Here the conversation ended, and George with Alice again went in, to see his father before his departure, while the rest took their leave.

"My dear boy," said the old man, "it does me good to see you. Edward too is so like you now,—and May like a daughter, and our dearest Alice too. So you must go back? The Lord protect you! Come again soon,—and then," taking Alice's hand and giving it to him, "even should I be called away, there is your own wife. Her father and I both give her to you. May you be happy as the happiest!"

After this affecting farewell, George took his hurried leave. "Alie, dear heart, you must give me up to God's care, as you did in Holland."

"Ah, George, I do; but it is not so easy as then. You are far more to me. By your father's solemn declaration, we are even now really joined. Come what may, I shall be ever yours in heart. The Lord watch over you, as I would if I could."

At the door Edward waited for a last embrace. "Dear George, I am like a woman for your sake. I shall be glad when these wars are over. I hope father will hold on till you return. We will take every care of him, and also of your Alice,—my May knows her so well. Take care of yourself. Keep clear of that spiteful wretch Wren!—I wish I had never known him. Spare the poor King if it be in your power. Come back to us soon.—There, my own George, good-bye!"

On the eve of starting, Ann ran out with a basket and flask in her hand. "What! a soldier, and forget his rations! Why, Will has his strapped behind him. Master George, you will want it, though you've no stomach for it just now. I know we here will have tears to drink, and no care for food for many a day. We shall think of you lying out on the showery ground, waking to hear the rattling drum, starting at the cannon, drawing your swords and charging;—woe's me for my poor Will!"

"Come, Ann," said George, "this will not do. Remember, your mistress needs cheering! You are no croaker! Thanks for the basket and flask,—now we must start. Give us a brave word as we go. Hurrah!" cried he, and the men responded. Their hoofs struck fire.

Ann's courage rose, and she shouted, "Down with Cavaliers, and up with Noll!"

The soldiers looked back laughing, and George again shouted "Hurrah!" They were gone.

Dullness and suspense fell upon those who remained. The risks of England, of the Eastern Counties, and of their dearest ones, were great, and hung upon the next battle. If the King prevailed, their prospects were terrific, and many a gallant Puritan would perish rather than survive in slavery. But surely so good a cause must be victorious.

Our Colonel paused seldom in his return to his post of duty.

The armies stood in sight of each other close by the village of Naseby, between Harborough and Daventry. The Parliament forces occupied a hill called Mill Hill; and the King an opposite ridge, with a wild moorland valley between named Broad Moor. The central body of the former was commanded by Fairfax and Skippon,—the right wing by Cromwell, and the left by Ireton, his son-in-law. Charles himself, with Lindsay and Astley, were in the center of the Royalists; the Prince Rupert, and Maurice his brother, were in command on the right, and Sir Marmaduke Langdale on the left.

A council of the King's party had been held that day: the King asked, "How long are we to fly from these crop-eared hounds, like the hares and foxes I chased at Daventry?"

Then old Lindsay, with his rough Scotch tone replied, "Your Majesty knows well that I aye set a stout heart to a stye brae; but these rogues of late show a different mettle: they used to keep their distance and watch our motions, avoiding a collision whenever they could; but since this 'new model' they thrust their long noses across our road, and show no sense of civility or precedence. They may pass for saints, but they fight like fiends."

Sir Jacob Astley remarked, "I cannot see why we take so much heed to a rabble of citizens headed by farmer Cromwell, the brewer of Huntingdon. A body of Royalist gentry ought to sweep away such scum like the dust of the earth."

Then old Lindsay laughed, and said, "Yet, Sir Jacob, at Marston Moor about a hundred standards, with our baggage and ammunition, fell into the hands of this scum; and their soldiers, when no powder was left, flung their pistols at our heads, and beat us with their swords."

"Yes," replied Astley, "but that was an accident. I vote for attacking them now, and making thorough work of it."

This was the unanimous vote, though Lindsay tried to calm the arrogant impetuosity of the officers, saying "Never despise an enemy,—a mangy dog is an uncanny foe when driven into a corner! Let us be cautious as well as bold."

"Don't freeze us with your cold Scotch snow," said the Prince; "we must set your wintry heather on fire."

Said the King in an angry tone, "You all take your own way without heed to your only true ruler. Rupert, beshrew me but I often wish you were gone, with your rude temper and ungovernable sallies. Lindsay is an old hedgehog, and Astley a self-satisfied prig. The Parliament has better generals and more obedient men than mine."

His followers listened with vexation, though not with surprise, being too used to this sort of accusation,—one or two only muttering, "Why should we stake our heads and our fortunes for this dotard?"

The officers of Fairfax also held their council. Unfortunately, our Colonel, George Sherwood, had not arrived in time for this gathering. Now he, seeing that the Prince continued to practice the same rash policy in every battle, had availed himself of his Swedish experience, and had carefully drilled the cavalry opposed to Rupert in the art of offering, at first, a slight resistance and a loose formation; but so soon as they had passed, he had taught them to re-form immediately, and return to their positions.

Fairfax took a great interest in this plan, and purposed making Cromwell lead on one wing, and Colonel Sherwood the other in direct opposition to the Prince. When the council opened, he explained his plans of attack, and his wish as to the command.

Then Cromwell said, "The Lord's work must not wait for loiterers. Where is Colonel Sherwood? I hear he is detained at his father's sick bed, and am sorry for him. We must let the dead bury their dead. He is a true soldier, but in his absence Colonel Ireton may well lead our left. He is a choice vessel, and follows the Lord fully."

This was what Fairfax greatly objected to,—it was giving Cromwell a double influence on the day's plans; but what could he do? "I trust," he observed, "that the scheme which Colonel Sherwood has diligently taught to his men may be put in practice by Colonel Ireton."

Ireton, a powerful man with a bluff manner, replied, "As your lordship pleases; but for my part I prefer to meet the Prince in his own way. We have recently always hurled him before us. Colonel Sherwood may use these shams and stratagems to avoid the shock of battle, but if I command I hope I may exercise my discretion.

Cromwell supported his favorite, though with the acknowledgment that such feints were often very sound military methods; but he hoped at this time, when God's hand was so evidently with them, that they would not be needed. Thus Ireton was placed in command in place of our Colonel.

About this time George appeared, weary and hot with his hard journey. When he learnt what had taken place, he modestly appealed against the decision in his absence. Ireton turned fiercely on him, saying, "After I have been appointed, it is little short of affront to speak thus. I stake my reputation on the braver tactics, which better suit me and an English army."

The forces then took their assigned positions, and all was ready for a critical engagement. Fairfax and George, having made all preparations, were eagerly watching for the first move, and expecting the usual dash of the Prince.

The warning piece was shot off, which sharpened the attention of both sides to the events now about to open.

"He is mounted and ready," exclaimed Fairfax—"his trumpeter sounds! See, Sherwood, they are in motion! Ireton prepares to meet them in close order—they approach—the ground is broken. Now the Prince gallops—as usual he casts his reins forward—he grasps sword and pistol, and spurs his charger—they rush down the hillside—'tis very grand!—they fly like the wind, and stamp like thunder—they meet their opponents with a shock like two billows, and foam up in a brief skirmish—ours give way!—the Prince drives them off, and gallops through them—Ireton is surrounded!—ah, he is captured! Go, Colonel, take his place—rally what are left of his force, and bring them up to our support."

So this great battle commenced: Ireton's boasting ended in grief, and George came to the command under great disadvantage. However he hastened to put in practice the maneuver he had taught the troops, and they soon rallied to his call in large numbers.

Cromwell meanwhile had borne down the left wing, and, holding his troops in hand, only pursued the foe a short distance; and he then, leaving a few companies to continue the pursuit, wheeled round on the center just as George brought up his restored line on the opposite flank of the King's center.

In his rapid advance George had to leap a wide ditch in the face of a hostile body ready to contest the opposite bank. Will Barnard and one or two men went over before him, but Will's horse fell short, and threw his rider on to the bank. One of the enemy, lance in hand, rode forward to make an end of the poor fellow, in whose features George recognized Stephen Wren. He had all but accomplished his cruel end, when George, diverting his horse across the ditch, and putting him to his full metal, alighted just between Wren and his victim. The encounter was fierce, but ended in Wren's retreat behind his covering party, though George cried out, "Halt, coward!—here I stand to abide your challenge."

The advancing body under George's command now dashed at full speed on the flank of Sir Jacob Astley's force, which they crumpled up into a disordered mass. George crossed swords with that general himself, who was violently cursing and abusing the rebel Roundheads, but was himself presently reduced to ask for quarter.

Cromwell had also broken up tough old Lindsay's division, and pushed forward to meet George in the very center of the King's line. "Always to the front, George!—but where is Ireton?"

"I regret to say he is a prisoner,—early in the action."

"Yes, I saw Rupert's hot charge. I confess your plan was the best. Ireton is too like the Prince—fiery and rash."

"Yet you sided with him against Fairfax and your old friend this morning," answered George.

"The Lord has overruled our counsel for good," replied Cromwell, nothing moved. "We must rescue Ireton. You have well deserved to take his place. You are a polished shaft in Jehovah's hand. But ah! here comes Rupert and his overblown cavalry. They are delivered into our hand! George, let us unite ranks for a final and decisive rout. Ho!—advance—left wheel—march—charge! 'God is our strength!'"

King Charles himself had ridden up to the head of the Royalist cavalry, saying with frantic gesticulation, "Now, messieurs, one charge more and victory is ours!—'God and Queen Marie!'"

It was vain: the main body of the Royal army was crushed. Cromwell and George fought side by side, and nothing could withstand the rapid dash of the Roundheads. Here it was that a gallant Parliamentary colonel, who lay mortally wounded, entreated those around him to open a way right and left, "by which he might see the rogues run."

The King was obliged to fly with a small escort. Large numbers of prisoners surrendered. The horse of Rupert fled at a gallop towards Leicester, pursued by Cromwell's troopers to the gates of the town. Of the prisoners, a great many were officers and ladies of the Court in their carriages, who had been brought there to see an easy conquest.

The King's baggage was seized, with all his private papers, which were of the utmost consequence, and were afterwards published by the Parliament as affording damning evidence of Charles's double dealing.

The battle had closed,—the wide moor was strewn with the wounded and slain,—the officers on the winning side were receiving prisoners to quarter, and taking the swords of officers. Human fiends, worse than vultures, prowled about stripping and robbing the helpless victims. A flock of wild Irish women, brought over with the King's Irish recruits, took a ferocious part in these operations, and with their skenes, or knives a foot long, scrupled not to ease the sufferings of the wounded by mortal stabs.

Cromwell and George again found themselves for a moment close together. "Praise be to God, my friend!—this is none other than His hand. We have honestly served our country to-day. There has been no drawing back the bow and arrow from the prey. Surely, after venturing our lives for our country we may hope for liberty of conscience to crown our efforts. Ah, George, it was this that we hoped for that day we helped the Swedes to conquest. It has come, and to God be all the honor."

George for some time moved from place to place with Will Barnard, and a few of his personal attendants, occupied in the congenial and gracious task of accepting the surrender of group after group of prisoners, who saw themselves so surrounded and broken as to be unable either to fight or fly.

Hastily approaching one of these groups, George was confronted by a body of men rather at bay than seeking peace, and somewhat stronger than his own following. He lifted the white flag as he had done in other cases, but they stood to arms. He soon recognized in one of the leaders his old foe and rival Stephen Wren, looking as if he had been drinking hard before the battle. Wren was saying, "Stand, firm, fellows,—we are stronger than these Roundhead dogs;—their leader is Cromwell's great friend,—let us seize him, and cut our way through, and we shall win a Prince's ransom, or make an end of a villain."

A severe conflict ensued, in which George's party soon showed their moral superiority to the reckless Cavaliers, most of whom were soon stretched on the earth, while the rest cried for mercy. George and Wren were engaged in personal combat, and the fury of the latter gradually gave way before the steady skill of the former, when, hearing an appeal for surrender, George suspended his attack, and drew back a little. Wren affected to misunderstand this movement for a retreat, and shouting out, "Recreant, you shall not escape thus,—offer your last prayer!" he rushed on afresh, in such disorder as enabled his opponent at one blow to dash his sword from his hand, and then, seizing his collar, to swing him from his saddle upon the moor.

Dismounting at once, George received his surrender, and was in the act of remounting, when the faithless wretch drew a concealed pistol, and fired it off close to George's back, shouting, as he saw him reel and fall to the ground, "Take that, rebel and fool!—now Alice shall never be yours!" Wren instantly mounted George's horse, and galloped madly away,—followed, however, closely by Will Barnard and his men, eager to avenge their Colonel.

For a few minutes George lay half insensible. Presently his senses awoke, and he knew his position. His wound was in the shoulder,—painful, but not, he thought, dangerous. He faintly called for Will. His heart was lifted towards the Divine Lord and Saviour he had long served, and to whom he committed himself for life or death. Then his love for Alice revived in overpowering tenderness, and memory ran rapidly over his entire course of life. He was rousing himself to try to stanch the flowing blood, which was beginning to coagulate and run less freely, when he heard rough female voices in a strange language, and felt his outer cloak being pulled from his shoulders. He turned a little, and saw cowering over him a creature hardly like a woman. Her shaggy black locks hung like a curtain over most of her swarthy face, only showing eyes of glittering coldness like those of a maniac. He could also clearly see the flash of some steel knife or dagger in her hand, ready to be plunged in his heart. He remained still as death while hands were searching his pockets, pulling off such jewels as he wore, and tearing off parts of his dress. Now and then he caught that keen icy stare surveying his features, and he thought he saw the creature lift the knife, but she struck no blow.

Ages seemed to him to have passed in this horrible position, and he began from exhaustion to fall into fresh faintness, when a sudden sound of approaching horsemen revived him, and seemed to disturb the hags who were plundering him. They stirred and rose;—the gallop came nearer;—again he heard the uncouth voices muttering,—then he saw the hand lifted;—he closed his eyes, and yielded up his life;—he felt a sharp pain in his side, and all was over!

Yes, it was Will returning, who had been away but a few minutes,—just enough to overtake the cowardly assassin, and to complete his punishment; but also just enough to leave his beloved master to the disaster. The wretched women flitted away, as he appeared, to seek some new scene of rifling and murder of the defenseless and brave.

Will was self-reproached indeed when he saw his master's state. "Alas, alas!—it was but a minute!—I have prevented the caitiff from boasting—I could not suffer him to escape; yet I should have staid by my master after saving my life this day. What will Mistress Alice and my Ann say? Here is the wound,—warm blood flows,—how near the heart! Here too is another wound by the shoulder—that was from the pistol. What is this second wound? I think he still lives—surely he does!" Then he rallied the attendants. They bound up the wounds, and made a litter, and bore the unconscious burden to head-quarters, where the surgeon reported him dangerously wounded, but likely to survive for some time.

As the Colonel moaned perpetually, he was heard to say, "Take me home!—Norwich—Alice—father!"

Cromwell, when he saw him, bent over and kissed him, and said, "George, thou shalt go home. The Lord keep thee in perfect peace till thou go home forever."

Then he ordered one of the royal carriages, taken that day, to be made ready, and George was laid comfortably in it. Herbert Hervey returned to the scene of unexpected distress just in time to bear his wounded friend home, escorted by his own troop of Norwich lads. They turned from the field of Naseby's victory in mournful procession, and took the road for Norwich.

A great army of commanders and officers witnessed the departure of the sad *cortége*, and Cromwell said aloud, "There goes Colonel Sherwood, one of the noblest and bravest of our leaders. My soul is distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan! Thou art stricken down in the victory thou didst mainly help to win. Thou hast lived to beat down the oppressor. Thou art taken from the troubles which must follow. Peace to thee!"

CHAPTER XLIII.

BETWEEN HOME AND HEAVEN.

"But love is indestructible;
Its holy flame forever burneth;
From Heaven came—to Heaven returneth.
It there is tried and purified,
And hath in Heaven its perfect rest;
It soweth here with toil and care,
But the reaping-time of love is there."

SOUTHEY.

THE proverb declares that "Ill news flies fast;" but on this occasion the news of the victory of Naseby reached Norwich by a dispatch from George at a time when his safety seemed assured. The relief and delight thus caused was indescribable. Alice, who had divided her time between nursing George's father and fears and prayers for the result of the battle, now yielded to the joy of thanksgiving, which was like a cordial also to her patient, with his fatherly love and care. The most outspoken rejoicer was Ann, who in hysteric happiness said, "Now these horrid fightings are over, won't we give the conquerors a welcome! They shan't leave us again in a hurry. Bless me, I never could bear widow's weeds. We will have feasts and shows. Oh, my Will! if you had never come back, I should have soon followed you!" And then they all sobbed with excess of joy.

Alice rebuked this wild outburst, saying, "Ann, you behave like a heathen! Did we not give them up to God's service? This is all according to my dream, but yet I tremble. He has answered our prayers, and spared them for a great victory; but if He had not—His holy will be done—though that had been worse than death to me."

"Truly, mistress, you speak like a book! I didn't mean anything wrong; but joy is uppermost just now, and I can't hold it in."

A few days afterwards they were preparing to celebrate their rejoicing by a great day of public thanksgiving. No further news had reached them from the army, except confirmations of the great triumph. The Cathedral of Norwich was crowded in the morning by all classes to hear the Rev. W. Bridge, who was chosen to preach. He now had become the virtual Bishop of the place, through his sufferings for the good cause and his heroic fidelity. There were present a vast body of new clergy, the civic authorities, the professional men and traders, and many of the poor, specially from Tombland and Pocthorpe. As yet, none of the army had returned, but there

were large triumphal arches erected to their honor, with the blazoned names of Edge Hill, Newbury, Marston Moor, and Naseby, to commemorate their gallant deeds. The names of Cromwell, Fairfax, Ireton, and of Colonel Sherwood, floated on many banners. All was hushed in the great Saxon pile. After a service of a mixed sort, in which Edward Sherwood read an abbeviation of the Liturgy, the Rev. J. Allen offered free prayer, then various hymns and psalms were sung, and the preacher rose to speak. His theme was characteristic—the theme of early studies and of life's experience—*Faith*. This he exemplified by St. Paul's language (Acts xxvii. 25) amid the peril of shipwreck: "Sirs, I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me." He painted the faith required in the dark days which England has passed through; the promises many had relied on, and their fulfillment that day. As he proceeded to set forth that had it pleased God to lengthen their sorrow and delay His deliverance,—to send them defeat instead of victory, and to permit their friends to lay down their lives like the holy martyrs, and like Zwingle recently on the field of Cappel—(here sobs interrupted his words),—still he trusted we should have said no less firmly, "Sirs, I believe God,"—"though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him," there was a deep general hum of earnest acquiescence. "But, bless the Lord, it is not so: we are delivered, and they are safe. It is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes."

As the people left the vast building, a lively martial band struck up, and forming into a procession of the various guilds and associations of the town, with the Mayor in their midst, they paraded with streamers, banners, and wild shouts, the chief part of the city. They then separated to hold a festival in each parish on some green or open place. The most interesting of these meetings that day was held on Tombland. Dr. Hope spoke to the chief toast of "Their victorious army, with Cromwell, and Sherwood, and its gallant leaders." Edward returned thanks for his brother in the hope that peace would now be made, and the legitimate rule be restored. He trusted his brother would soon return with such peaceful news as to receive their heartiest welcome. Here followed the most united cheers, and shouts of "Bravo, Colonel Sherwood!"—"his father, the Alderman!"—which rose to a tornado when some one suggested "and his bride." "Hurrah! Hurrah!—fair Alice, his bride!"

"The good Rector was returning home, when he was staid by one of the rough Pocthorpe fellows, who begged to speak to him a moment. On getting out of the crowd, the fellow said, respectfully and sadly, "I fear I bring bad news; but you believe God, sir, don't you?"

"Surely, my man,—what is it?—Any one ill in Pocthorpe who would see me? I am ready."

"Nearer home, sir. My son has just come from the army: he brings ill-tidings."

"What, has there been another battle, and a defeat?"

"No, no! the victory is all safe; but—oh, sir, I'm loth to say it—they are bringing home a wounded man."

"Ah, my poor fellow—your other son!—let us go to him."

"Nearer home, sir!—one whose fall will dim the eyes of all this city, and cast a blank shade on your own home."

"What! can it be—not Colonel George? We heard from him that he was safe."

"Aye, sir, it is, though! How it happened, I cannot tell; but he is sore wounded, though alive. But, sir, you believe God even in the shipwreck?"

"I do. This is a shipwreck, indeed! The Lord be merciful—His will be done! Thank you for your great kindness and care. I must go home."

The stunned clergyman hastened toward home. Alice, he was aware, was at her post, nursing Alderman Sherwood. He knew not how soon the returning party might appear with their sad burden. He was obliged as hastily as possible to apprise her mother, who, with woman's prevision, seemed singularly prepared, and exclaimed, "My child!—she must not be alone and unready! God help us!"

At once she hurried after her daughter,—not a moment too soon, for as she crossed Tombland she saw a crowd moving that way down the road from the Castle. Entering the house, she made her way to the sick-chamber, and drew Alice aside, who asked, "What is it, mother? You are pale and sad—you have some bad news?"

"Yes, dearest we shall all need courage; and you—oh, my darling!"

Then Alice trembled for a moment, and looked up to heaven. "Tell me, mother, at once. I had a dream about dear George, which I know will be fulfilled. Is he wounded, or dead? Now, tell me." And she gazed on her mother as if life was in her words.

"My child, he is wounded, and coming home. Indeed, he will be brought here almost directly."

"God be thanked, mother! then he is not—— I shall see him, and I can nurse him. But I will go and speak to his father. Hark! surely there is some stir in the street,—I will go."

At that moment, as Alice departed, Ann broke into the room, and, throwing herself into a chair, wept hysterically. "Forgive me, ma'am,—they are bringing him home! Will says he is but just alive—a dying man. Oh, oh, oh!—dear Master George that I loved from a boy! And I am to make ready his bed and his winding-sheet!"

"Come, Ann," said Madam Bridge, "I will go with you and get all ready. There is no time to lose. We may help to save him. While there is life there is hope."

"But Mistress Alice will die for him, madam, and she knows no more about it than the babe unborn."

"Yes, she does, Ann,—and she will be the first to nurse him. We must all support her, dear child."

Thus, by the time the mournful procession entered the house, all was ready. Alice was the first to meet them, pale but firm. It was she who ushered the men bearing that covered "carry" to the room up-stairs, where her mother and Ann received them. The unconscious soldier was then, by the aid of his friend Herbert and the men, gently lifted into his own bed, quite exhausted by his journey. Dr. Hope appeared at that moment, and at once ordered a strong cordial to be administered. Alice quietly fetched it, though inexpressibly shocked by his deadly paleness and want of all apparent animation. She was encouraged, however, greatly, as she moistened the dry lips, to find that they moved to sip the nourishment. Presently even a spoonful was swallowed, and by degrees more, while the breathing was regular, though the eyes were closed. After awhile the Doctor very gently examined the wounds, and carefully cleansed and dressed them afresh, which seemed to afford the patient still greater comfort. By degrees he settled into a restful sleep, and there was nothing more to do but to watch for his waking.

Alice would not leave the room, but said to the Doctor as he left, "You need not tell me,—I fear man can do little for him."

The Doctor very earnestly replied, "To God all things are possible;—we will do our best."

In the next room, the Doctor interrogated Herbert on the mournful event. The young man for the first time broke down, and said, with sobs, "Oh that I had been there! but I was away on duty, and only returned to find him stretched out almost a corpse. The wretch Wren had always threatened. George was too noble to believe it, and had received him to quarter, when he shot him with a pistol from behind."

"The pistol wound in the shoulder," said the Doctor, "would be curable; but the deep side-wound, from a long spear or dagger, has gone, I fear, too near his life. Yet he will rally, perhaps for some time,—and who can tell? The old gentleman takes it wonderfullv. He rests on Alice like a child. Alice is my hope for them both. She must be kept up. If anything can work a miracle for poor George, it will be the desire to live for her sake. May, love, go home with me now,—you must not see her yet."

Just then appeared the Count and Countess, full of tender sympathy, and both ready to take any share of the duties of the sick chamber. Gabrielle at once stole into the room, taking with her a pitcher of water and a dish of needful articles, which she handed to Alice as if nothing special had happened since they worked together as nurses in the camp. Alice received them with her habitual quiet. She then took the Countess by the hand—Gabrielle shivering at the icy coldness of her fingers,—and led her to the bed, saying, "He looks better. Will he sleep long? What should be ready when he wakes? Can you watch a little, and let me sit down? I tremble so, and am almost faint. I am not used to it now. I shall soon be better." So she sank into an easy-chair, and Gabrielle assumed for the time the part of aetive watching and preparation, for which, however willing, Alice was utterly disabled. From Gabrielle's arrival, however, she steadily recovered her physical and moral energy, and they were soon fully installed together.

For many hours George remained thus insensible, yet frequently taking the nourishment prescribed, and seemingly gaining strength. Dr. Hope's prophecy was fulfilled, for in the afternoon of the next day, as Alice had fed the sufferer with a spoon, she was startled by his eyes opening, and his weak voice saying "Alie!" She replied, and kissed his cheek, when he softly said, "Where am I,—Rheinfield? You and Gabrielle! Oh, the cannon and the horses!—I am weary with fighting. We conquer! I am saved for Alie! Cromwell says, 'Well done, George!' My enemy—down—give him quarter! I am wounded.—Is life over?—my Alie lost?—Oh, Christ! Who is this maniac?—her cold eye—that steel point! Home, Herbert!—take me home! Am I at home?—am I, my own Alie?"

The Countess assured him he was in old Norwich, and in his father's house, when he said, "Yes, but he must not know. I will sleep again a little, and then I shall wake and talk to you all, for I have so much to say." Then he slept for some time, and on waking seemed more like himself. He sent messages to his parents, knew the Doctor and May, saw Will, and thanked him for his care in bringing him home, which made the poor fellow sob aloud. He asked Edward to pray by his couch; after which the rest withdrew, and left him with his nurses.

He then took Alice's hand, and, looking at her with passionate love, he said, pausing again and again to gather strength, "This is a bitter cup, my beloved; but our Father gives it. He is very good to let us meet again. It is sweet, is it not? But life is short. Heaven is home. Those are happy who get home soonest. Do you recollect your dream, Alie? I have never forgotten it. I thought at the time what it meant, and I fancy you did too. It is a victory after all. And if I go to that glorious feast-table a little before you, you will soon be ready, and I shall come for you to lead you to the King."

Amid the sobs which Alice vainly tried to repress, she fondly assured him she was wholly his, whether he should recover or not; and she added, "You know in my dream I was a bride. Before you left, your father gave us to each other. I am as truly yours as if I were your bride. I dread to risk the loss of ever being your wife—the very crown of my life."

"Nay," interrupted George, "that was my great hope too; but now it would be selfish to bind you, for we must not deceive each other—it is not for long. God's will be done!" After a short silence, Alice took his hand, saying, "George, even if Heaven awaits you, and I must stay behind, it is my earnest wish to have the right, the honor, the privilege of being owned as yours, bearing your name, and carrying out your wishes. It will comfort me inexpressibly, if the end be as you fear. Do not deny me: this is my serious and most earnest desire." George expressed his warm admiration of this self-sacrificing love, but still hesitated to accept it. But at last he gave way to her persistence, and it was agreed that they should be married by the good Rector the next day, quite privately, and the secret kept within their own circle till the issue of George's illness should be revealed.

The small party met early next morning in George's bed-chamber, where Alice appeared arrayed but little differently from her nursing dress. George had his undress uniform, with some military decorations, put over his shoulders. Though pale, he sat up, with his keen, playful eyes, his handsome beard, and fine head, telling what a noble man he was. Will Barnard sat behind to support him and meet all his wants. Edward stood close by, with the tenderest concern for his brother. The Rector and his wife, with the Count and Countess, and May's father, appeared.

The solemn service, with its personal vows and mutual covenants, was soon completed. George, whose face kindled into a glow of brightness, then said, "Alie, Alie! my dreams are accomplished! You are mine! Your dream of the wedding veil too! Heaven bless you for your noble devotion to one so little worthy.

Your dislike of the soldier's coat was perhaps prophetic. Are you ashamed of my life-work?"

"I glory in it, George;—you have freed and blessed our country, and are one of her heroes. You have been a Christian hero."

"Too much, too much, Alie! I tried to do my duty, and I submit to my Lord's will. How thankful I feel now to that good Dutch friend, your adopted father, my Alie! You will want no earthly good, nor means of doing good. I shall soon hope to meet him, and to talk of you there."

"George, I shall remain the same to you both if I live to be old; but oh, if I might, I could wish——"

"I know your wishes, dearest, and so does our best Friend in Heaven. There a thousand years are but as one day; and though some days of earth seem very, very long, you know," he added, smiling, "in your dream I went first, and left you to prepare."

Suddenly, a stir was heard below—the trampling of a horse—the sound of a bugle, which stirred all George's nerves. Steps resounded on the stairs—a deep, well-known voice was audible;—yes, it was Cromwell! All bowed respectfully to him as he strode to the bed, saying, "Blessed be God who has preserved and raised you up, my dear comrade and brother! I got away as soon as possible. On the way to London I would find means to come to you. Ah!" he cried, looking round, "a wedding! Why was I not invited? Could you not wait? Well, well!—I see. Mistress George Sherwood," said he, gravely saluting Alice, "you are wife to one of England's best generals, and one of my chosen friends;—a chosen friend, also, of our great Master whom you both serve. Now let George lie down; and then let me pray with you as we used to pray yonder among the Swedes in Germany." He had taken in the whole circumstances, as his prayer showed. They all knelt, and he poured out an intercession full of child-like faith and prophet-like eloquence—full of tender personal allusions, mixed with choice Scripture passages, entering into the peculiar position of husband and bride, parents and friends,—the joys and the fears of all. At last he seemed to ascend with them a hill of transfiguration very near Heaven, yet still within reach of earth, where they only knew and cared that they were now and ever in the hand of God and in the presence of Jesus. When it ended, and they rose, George held his hand, thanking him warmly, and begged all to retire, and leave him with Cromwell alone a few minutes: "for," said he, "I know events will not let you stay here long, and I wonder how you could come at all, and am very grateful for it."

When they were alone, there was a little pause, which Cromwell broke, saying, "George, first let me own I was wrong to you before Naseby. I ought to have known you better. Forgive me. I have hard work among so many, and am apt to be suspicious by finding out the selfishness of others."

"It has been long forgiven," said George; "I love you too well not to bear anything from you. Oh, you will need grace, my friend, on your high and almost kingly path. I hope the army will not break with the Parliament, and that you may never be impatient of English liberty. I wanted, however, to commend to you my wife and brother when I am gone."

"It is so, then!" said Cromwell, brushing away a tear. "I lose another son in you. Poor dear Henry! Well, we must all stand ready for the Master's call, and you have shared a decisive victory here. Be sure I shall never forget you or yours."

Then George explained the position of Edward, and his wish to draw him from his old associations.

"I'll tell you what," said Cromwell; "he shall be one of the new masters of one of the Cambridge colleges under the Parliament; and if the Count likes him to hold his living, and even use his Prayer Book,—well, we do not mean to persecute good and quiet men. Yes, I think I can set that straight. And so, George, we must say farewell. I have had much of that lately. But you are very near to me. We will part as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. May you have an 'abundant admission into His everlasting kingdom,' and may our next rendezvous be at 'His right hand.'"

"Farewell, true friend! Before we meet, may you have the glory of settling England in a free and Christian way of liberty, and of reforming our Church after apostolic fashion. Then we shall meet in victory and joy above."

So Cromwell left his friend, and passed into the chamber where the rest were waiting, as in a sort of *levée*, to greet him. Cromwell reassumed the commanding dignity which already sat well upon him, and passed round the circle saying kind and comforting words to all. Speaking to Edward and May, he said, "Keep near the Heavenly Master, young people. Love one another in Him. You, sir, are in orders; but you may be hampered for a time in your ministry. I shall try to open the path for all godly and earnest men. What was your college at Cambridge?"

"—— College," replied Edward.

"It has no master now. For your brother's sake, whom we cannot reward as he deserves, I think I can promise you that honorable post, if you can hold it loyally under 'the powers that be.'"

"General, I have my convictions. I should prefer a college life to any, but——"

"I will hear no buts now. Think of it, and pray over it. Don't rashly set yourself to perpetuate England's conflict when there is hope of peace. I shall communicate with you again."

"Many thanks, General; I will do as you say."

"Sir," said May, "let me say how we all prize your friendship, and can never forget your sympathy on this strange day."

Cromwell passed before Bridge, and said, "You have done your part nobly in the Assembly of Divines. You had tremendous opposition to meet. The Lord stood by you. I had rather have fought at Naseby many times than had to meet with argument and good temper the conceit and bigotry of those stiff Presbyterian parsons. You five fought a Thermopylæ for English religion in the future. The free Churches you are setting up over the country are garrisons for loyalty and progress. I may have at times to bow in the temple of Rimmon for the nation's sake, but my heart is with you. Hold on: the Lord bless the work of your hands!"

Bridge bowed deeply, and thanked him with glistening eye.

Cromwell next addressed the Count, assuring him of firm friendship for Holland, and the prosecution of liberty abroad with a vigorous hand. "Yes, I will have the priests and tyrants of Europe to know that a spirit is awake in England which will no longer bear with their cruelties to their Protestant subjects. The fleets and soldiers of England were better employed in redressing these wrongs than in fighting here at home. You I hope to see much in London, and shall expect from you most valuable information on foreign matters."

Then turning to the lady, he said, in a gentle voice, "Lady, still use your influence in bringing yonder young priest to moderate his unreasonable notions. I know of your pretty church at Heston—Milton told me some tender passages concerning its parsonage. Now get them there, and let him preach and use his prayers and do good among the folk. I shall have to enlist your aid, lady, in many such social transformations for England's good. There is some good in the early training of a courtier—you have it, and we must employ it. I believe in the virtuous and useful diplomacy of women."

"For such purposes, General, I am at your service," was the Lady Gabrielle's response.

Cromwell then moved away to pay a brief visit to George's father ere he departed, but in crossing the hall he met Ann, weeping bitterly. He instantly went up to her, took her hand kindly, saying, "Poor lass, what ails thee? I recollect thee when I was here last, sweeping the room. Hast forgotten to sweep thy heart's chamber always the first thing? Why, then, such bitter tears?"

"Oh, sir," said Ann, "you are good; but my poor master!—I knew him from a brave, dear boy; and he and Mistress Alice!—I knew their love so long;—I so longed and prayed for their happy marriage! My God! how canst Thou look down and end it all like this—he dying and she heart-broken! But, sir, I forget myself: who am I, to talk so to your honor?"

"My poor woman, I am sorry for you and for the grief of your faithful heart; but never fall out with your God—your best friend, who looks down and does this just because He sees it is best. Did not He look down and see His Son die on Calvary to save us all? Was not that worse?—and yet how has it turned out! Our Colonel here, and many another noble fellow, has given up his life for England. He walked in Christ's footsteps, and is going early to his crown. Would you hold him back? Your mistress would not. She is not broken-hearted, believe me. She will live a life of unselfish goodness. You will help her. Brave and good servants are our best helpers in care and sorrow."

Ann clasped her hands, saying, "Blessing on you! So great and glorious from your victory, to speak so friendly to a poor servant, and comfort her better than a parson! However the rich and great may use you, the honor and blessing of such as us will glorify your name."

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE WIDOW'S HOME.

'Eins steht in Leben nie allein
Ruh ist nur wo sich's regt
Wer mich versteht-ganz still zu sein
Der war auch nie bewegt."

CAROLINE LEONHARDT LYSER.

THE Colonel survived his wedding long enough to have interviews with all his friends. Cromwell sent messages, together with a General's commission, as a token of the thanks and esteem of the Parliament for his distinguished services. George expressed his gratification, though such honors were now of little moment to him. Gradually, however, strength for friendly converse failed, and he could bear nothing but a word or two from Alice—chiefly well-known and golden texts from the living oracles of sacred Scripture. The end came very peacefully.

Seldom was such a funeral known in Norwich. The whole space of Tombland was covered by a silent, sad throng. The carriages of the nobles were escorted by the poor of Pocthorpe. The soldiers of his own regiment from the Castle fired their farewell salvos over the grave. Not long after the good father, Alderman Sherwood, followed his son George to the better land, with almost a repetition of like public grief and honor. Alice, sustained till then by active duty, now gave way, and for some time was severely ill. So soon as the disorder abated, the Count and Countess took her with them to Holland, where she had a complete change, and enjoyed the tenderest care.

A whole year had elapsed since Cromwell bade farewell to his dying comrade, when a gallant party came pricking along the old London road towards Norwich. The Count and Countess rode first, with Alice in deep widow's array. Beside them was Dr. Edward Sherwood, who had gone out to receive them.

Arrived at Tombland, the party dismounted, and the chief persons walked at once to the church yard. There they paused before the place of sepulture of General George Sherwood and of his father the Alderman. Alice was in front, with her head bent and her arms folded on her breast, engaged in prayer. Edward after a time drew near to offer his arm and lead his sister away. She smiled sadly on him, preparing to obey, but involuntarily her face turned towards the hallowed spot, while her feet sought to leave it. The party mounted again, and rode to the noble house near Cossey which had formerly been made ready for the General and his happy wife. This residence the young widow was now to occupy, with Sergeant Will Barnard and his wife as her faithful attendants. Through a grand avenue of oaks they wound to the porch, conversing of past times, and chiefly of George and his pleasant memories.

"How rejoiced my dear George would have been," said the widow, "to see you as you now are! Best of all, you have become a cordial helper of my dear father in his Church work. Who would have thought it? I long to see your dear wife."

"Yes, Alice, no one will welcome you as she will. It is strange, and yet pleasant, to be so united. I have been awhile drawn aside; but at length utter disappointment with the side I first chose, and the effect of the holy living and dying of my father and brother, have restored me. As for religion, I could not maintain the old Church, for it was abolished. I liked not the Scotch way; and on opening the matter with your father, my convictions were gradually and wholly changed: my illusions dispelled, my way was open."

Said the Lady Gabrielle, "God seems now to have partly restored George to us in you."

"The war is ended, however," rejoined Alice, "which has cost so many precious lives. Let us hope that England's lives have not been lost in vain, and that a new era of peace and freedom will begin from this time."

"I desire it," replied Edward, "more than I hope for it. I know so well the fanatic strength of Royalist prejudice, that I fear the King will refuse to the last to abandon despotism and Episcopacy. But here we are."

On the steps of the great portal stood the bright figure of Edward's wife, with her good father, together with the father and mother of Alice, to welcome the travelers. The meeting was very affecting when Alice threw herself into her mother's embrace, weeping bitterly, and her father held them both in his arms. In the hall hung a large portrait of George as he appeared at Naseby. After looking at it long and silently, Alice withdrew to her own apartment for a time.

When Alice reached her own room, and felt herself free from notice, she sank into a chair and sobbed aloud. "Oh, my precious George! my broken life! What is the good of wealth and home without thee? Where is Heaven, that I might follow thee? Wicked heart, almost jealous of Edward and his May, and their happiness! Wicked heart, almost angry with the Disposer of Events, and nurturing involuntary hatred of that murderer, and almost blaming poor Will for leaving my wounded one alone a moment! Oh, I would have stood over him, or lain down beside him!—I would have driven off those harpies, but he was left——"

Here Ann, of whose presence her mistress was unaware during this wild outburst of long-restrained grief, became flushed and roused at this scarcely intended accusation against her husband. She quickly broke out, "My lady, my dear lady,—though you are so unjust after these years of service,—send us away at once!—disgrace us! Yes, we will go! Heaven knows my poor Will would have laid down his life for his master or you. He rues sorely the moments when he left him. But could he let the villain off unpunished?—could he know that those infamous wretches were lurking about on the field? Has he not suffered enough, but you too must turn his enemy? We will depart at once, and thus fix the wretchedness of our lives."

By this time Alice was fully aware of the haste of her expressions, and full of deep regret for the wounds she had unintentionally inflicted. She drew near to her old servant, and, taking her hand, said, "Ann, you must have pity on me, and forgive a disordered heart. Can you really think I hate Edward, and envy him and his dear May? or that I quarrel with my God? or that I am really so unjust to your long-tried Will? You must know better; so forgive a hasty word of mere stormy passion; and by this kiss—like what I gave you when I was your little nursling—forget my words, and be sure they were only transient contradictions of all my deepest feelings. Do you believe me?"

"Surely," said Ann,—like all such natures, rather slow to give up impulses,—"I believe you, but yet perhaps we had better go. These other feelings will still hide deep down in your heart, and may come from your lips again."

"I believe," said Alice, "they are finally gone. I begin a new life here: the strong feelings of the past are buried in the tomb. I hope to live for my Lord, and for the poor and sorrowful. You will help me as you did in Holland?"

"I am sure, mistress, no one can be more ready for such a life than I and my Will,—for all he was once a brave soldier, and I a frolic-loving girl. But we will be sober, and wear ourselves out in toiling and moiling for the poor and the sick; only I hope you don't expect too much gratitude from them, else you may be disappointed."

"I do not, Ann, though I have found as true gratitude from them as from any class. But we won't be altogether immersed in labor and care: we will learn of the Lady Gabrielle to seek some recreation also."

"Mistress Alice, I don't believe I could leave you if you was to drive me off,—nor Will either. We were brought up by you, and, God willing, will serve you till we die; and I suppose in Heaven there'll be some sort of resurrection of our kind of service in some way."

"Perhaps there, Ann, we may serve you,—for it is a very different world."

The next day after Alice's return was a high day in Norwich, and in England too. A thanksgiving was appointed for the close of actual war. In the morning, services were held in the various churches; and in the afternoon, a general gathering was fixed in the Cathedral.

In the morning the whole circle of our friends proceeded to the large meeting-house built by the Count in the field which Mijnheer Koop had purchased. It stood back from the road in a peaceful seclusion, with a green paddock all round planted with shady trees. Many of the people clustered about on the pavement in front of the building, welcoming each other and conversing, till the minister appeared. The place was lofty and spacious, with deep square pews for families; and in the center two long pews for the poor,—one for men, the other for women. A large low pulpit occupied the middle of one side, while a gallery ran round the rest of the walls. The wood was dark oak, and the place was lighted by handsome windows.

The house was crowded even to the pulpit stairs. There were many of the professional men, the manufacturers and tradesmen of the city. It was a prosperous and very devout body of people, zealously devoted to their Scriptural forms.

Bridge, the minister, took his place—in the prime of life still, looking vigorous and happy in his sacred work. A service like that we have described in Rotterdam carried with it all hearts in a tide of gratitude for God's mercy in restoring them from exile, and in closing the sad war with hopes of reconciliation and progress.

In the afternoon an immense representation of all classes of citizens filled the Cathedral. After worship of the same simple kind, only with more psalmody, the Rev. W. Bridge held the people in wrapt attention for an hour, on his old theme of Faith, even in suffering: Romans iv. 18, "Who against hope believed in hope." He set forth Abraham's trial, and his firmness; he "staggered not." Then he passed to the fearful task before the Parliament when the King's Government had challenged them to combat. They too "staggered not;" and, through much suffering, God had led them on to victory, and the hope of peace. But they must still watch, so as not to lose all the fruit by hasty patchwork, and by restoring the power of their enemies. The style of the preacher was bright, and full of instructive metaphor. Thus, "Surely God loveth me not," says one, "or He would not put such hard work on me. Now tell me, if a general has some hard service, and he picks out half a dozen soldiers for it, do these say, 'Our general does not prize us or love us?' nay, but the contrary, 'Surely our general prizes us and loves us, because he selects us for these hard trusts.'"

At the close of his discourse the preacher turned to an illustration known to their whole city. "General George Sherwood was born of a good stock in this place. You all knew him from a brave and handsome boy. He soon became a soldier of Christ, and numbers of youths, specially in Pocthorpe, rallied round him as a teacher of the Bible, and then as a leader in fighting for their country. When he saw England down-trodden, and many of us exiles for conscience' sake, he helped us to escape. He took a lead in defending these Eastern Counties, and specially Norwich, from those distressful invasions which other counties suffered. He was in the forefront at Edge Hill, Newbury, Marston Moor, and many lesser fights. He greatly helped the glorious victory at Naseby, as I have been told by Cromwell himself. There it pleased God his active service should end; but he returned here wounded and dying. The last scenes of his life were greatly occupied in confirming the faith and settling the affairs of those he loved, and in arranging for the good of our city. His last words were, 'I know in whom I have believed.' Has not God given us in him an instance of great faith, which does great things and suffers great things? May we all be 'followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.'"

As the pastor thus spoke, sobs were heard all over the Cathedral from youths whom George had trained, families he had comforted and helped. But Alice looked steadily on her father's face, with a sort of glorious triumph contending with her sorrow that her husband was publicly sealed as such a hero and such a Christian.

As they left the Cathedral, Ann, dashing her tears away, said, "Was not Mistress Alice wonderful? She sat like an angel looking into Heaven!"

"She is an angel," said Will; "and Heaven is the place for heroes who have done their work."

"I almost begin to think," replied Ann, "perhaps it may not be so ill-ordered. If he had lived—bless him!—his brother would never have taken this good turn. He himself would have been always away in London; his life would then not have left this deep impress;—and he—well, what work can they find for a warrior up there! They may have, to be sure, the devil and his angels to fight; and I'll warrant he'll be in the foremost rank of God's army."

CHAPTER XLV.

BRIDGET CROMWELL'S MARRIAGE.

"Then Albion's sons
Were sons indeed,—they felt a filial here,
And shining each in his domestic sphere,
Shone brighter still, once called to public view."

COWPER.

A GREAT event took place in London soon after the thanksgiving day—the marriage of the eldest daughter of General Cromwell to Colonel Ireton.

The morning of the wedding-day dawned bright and fair. "May, my love," said Edward to his wife, "I don't care much for this marriage. Ireton supplanted George with Cromwell."

"But," replied May, "he will find his match. Bridget is very different to your meek wife, And you, thank God, are very different—shall I say?—from what you were once, or we could never have agreed."

"Is the change in me only? Why, May, you are not the same person!—you used to be biting as the east wind;—but now you are a perpetual sunbeam!"

"Perhaps I was before,—to every one but you; but you were self contained, and censorious on others. Now the assuming priest is lost in the enlightened Christian gentleman."

"We are complimentary this morning, my love! I used to think I owed my best influence to Alice; but I begin to fancy that she rather fostered my disease, while it was all the while laughing George and critical May who were the alkali to cure me."

"I am sure, Edward, I was growing bitter and jealous; but since you have come to yourself, all that crust has fallen off. Besides, your profound devotion to religion has always been a true lesson to us all. Only never put on the priest's cowl again, or I must go back to my father, or to the cloister."

"That seems most unlikely, my lovely wife, for your power is rooted as deep in my reason as in my heart."

"Edward, how much we owe to George's unconscious power! His mirth ever kept me from a morbid discontent, while his sound sense was a constant corrective to us all."

"I wish I had appreciated it more early, but now I daily recur to it. George will always live to us."

Master Milton was expected to breakfast, in order to proceed in the Count's train to the Cathedral at Westminster. Will Barnard was up in attendance on Dr. Edward Sherwood. He was walking early, before the house door, with Rudy Hervey—who loved to gossip with him of the wars,—when a carriage drove up, from which alighted a youngish man, carefully helped by his ancient servant, as if he were a child. Will went forward to receive them, when the gaunt servant met him, saying, "Could the Count be seen? My master is invited. He is General Cromwell's friend!—John Milton."

Will hastened to say, "Surely;—will your master walk in?—you are early."

"There!" cried the servant, turning round angrily on his master, "did I not tell you we were too soon when you muttered something about 'the cock's shrill clarion?'"

"But will you enter?—the Count will very soon——" Will could not finish for mirth, when he saw the servant unbutton the visitor's cloak, remove his hat, and give him an arm up the steps as if he had been a decrepit weakling.

At last the master was settled in a room with a book in his hand, in such quiet as chattering little Rudy would permit, who kept asking, "Sir, are you the great poet? Do you know Cromwell?—I do? he sent specially for me! Do you like horses and hunting? Isn't the Countess a splendid woman? This is a fine house, sir?" Poor Milton feebly replied, yes—no, indeed, and moved from chair to chair in vain. At last he said, "Boy! I have trained many youths, but I would not undertake you." "Thanks," said the incorrigible Rudy, "but I don't want training."

All were soon prepared to start, in a splendid array of carriages, and found the streets full of similar processions. They were graciously re-

ceived, in a large hall full of company, where a brief service was conducted by the Most Reverend Archbishop Ussher—a great friend of Cromwell,—with some prayers of the old liturgy repeated without book. They then marched to the Abbey, where a lengthy service was effectively managed by the dissenting divines Dr. Goodwin and the Rev. W. Bridge; from which they returned to a banquet. Cromwell was escorted by many of his officers and a body of troops. The bridegroom and bride walked under a silken canopy, with white streamers held over them by young pages,—before them a number of lovely girls scattered flowers.

After the banquet, the company met in the withdrawing-room. In the center stood the bridal pair,—Bridget richly dressed, full of life and active merriment, with a commanding look which resembled her father. Ireton was a tall, well-built trooper, of narrow intelligence. Cromwell himself looked his best, with his paternal gratification very manifest, and his most genial qualities in play. Even his enemy Mistress Hutchinson admitted that he "had much natural greatness, and well became the place he usurped." His wife hovered about him to see that all went well. His handsome daughter Elizabeth—afterwards Lady Claypole, whom he loved most tenderly—with her future husband, together with his younger daughters, formed an inner ring. There were also present Colonel Desborough—who married Cromwell's sister,—his sons Henry and Richard, several also of the great generals of the time, and of his scientific and religious friends.

John Milton asked permission to read three sonnets on the occasion, "On losing a daughter," "On gaining a wife," and "On success in arms and love." The pathos of the first touched all hearts, and even Cromwell's eyes paid their tribute. The second was so full of learned allusions as to confuse the hearers, and prove the author to know nothing of his theme. The last, by its spirit and ring, amply made up for the second, and the room shook with applause.

"Milton," said Cromwell, "most hearty thanks for the honor you have done us, and the pleasure you have given. In the distant future, where your kingdom lies, we shall hope to be among those who live in fame through you as our poet and historian."

The company then turned to general conversation. Cromwell engaged the Count, Bridge, Dr. Sherwood, Sir W. Hervey, with Whitelocke, Lisle, and Desborough, in conference on the position of affairs.

"What are we to do with the King?" asked Cromwell, "when the Scots yield him to us?"

"Are you sure they will?" asked Desborough. "Not unless you pay them a round ransom, I trow. 'Canny Scot holds all he's got.'"

"What is the King worth to us?" said Lisle. "He has cost us dear already."

"True," said Cromwell; "and may live to cost us more."

"Why not let him go free, abroad—to France or America—any where out of England?" asked the Count.

"That's my argument," said Whitelocke; "it would disarm him and his party. If here, you must imprison him, and make him a martyr. Let him go."

"I also hold with that view of the case," said Sir W. Hervey; "on the principle of handling a runaway horse: give him his head, and plenty of spur."

"But," said Cromwell, "our French enemy, his father-in law, would gladly plot for his restoration, or that of his son."

"So he would," remarked the Count, "if his son in-law were imprisoned here, for he could set up Prince Charles against his father."

"I see no other end," interrupted Lisle, "if he is kept in England, but his death."

"Never," said Cromwell, "unless by fair sentence of court. And is that likely? To try a king,—to kill a king,—impossible! Why, the women would rise in arms in his defense!"

"It is a new thing, General," said Sir W. Hervey, "for you to fear an insurrection of women. Yet it often happens that a conqueror of all outside opponents is very much of a subject at home."

"So he should be," replied Cromwell, "to a good woman. I am not ashamed to own my happy subjection, and I hope my daughter will not be without power over her Colonel. Only bad men make their women slaves."

"Make the King Governor of the American plantations, with a good salary," said Desborough.

"What!" exclaimed Bridge, "send him to tyrannize over those who have left all for freedom to worship God!"

"It is a terrible nut to crack," said Cromwell, "look at it how you will. There is a large number who think he ought to be brought to trial, as Strafford was, for crimes which he instigated."

Milton now entered into the conversation, saying, "Are not these last of whom the General speaks grandly right? Does the King's robe, crown, and scepter shelter and condone public infraction of law? Can he who executes law on others claim exemption himself? Is not the sacred principle of justice 'No respect of persons?' The higher the offender, the more imperative should be the inquisition, and the more severe the penalty. Hath he shown tenderness and equity in the poising of the eternal scales? Shall the evil example go forth from us that there is no earthly vengeance for regal transgressors,—that justice is blinded by the glories of a throne?"

"Excellent—excellent!" said Cromwell; and almost all repeated the praise, but in a tone as if these high-flown principles were not current coin in the forum, or the diplomatic sphere.

"What is the matter yonder?" said Cromwell. "Some news has pained my Bridget." It appeared that an aid-de-camp from the head-quarters had arrived to say that Ireton's division was suddenly called to advance, in order to watch the movements of the Scotch, which might involve a sudden engagement. The news had greatly excited the circle. Ireton, as a zealous soldier, at once prepared to obey. His bride, however, was by no means submissive, and all her passions were aroused. "You shall not go!" said the recently made bride, stamping her little foot on the ground. "I will not marry!—alas, it is done! I will disown and leave you, if you do me this grievous dishonor. You should fling up your commission rather. There's some trick at the bottom of this. Ladies, I appeal to you! Father, he must not, shall not go!" cried the excited girl, who had lost all self-control. Her mother and sisters interfered in vain; but on her father approaching, and saying, "Bridget, what is it?" she was more calm, and said, "Father, you are at the head of the army. Is my husband to be torn from me to-day in your presence?"

Cromwell, hearing from a messenger what the matter was, looked sad and hard, and only said, "Daughter, every soldier's first lesson is obedience, and every soldier's wife must help him to keep it. Thousands of Englishmen have had to leave wife and home at a moment's notice, and to go forth perhaps never to return: and can my daughter ask me to spare her? Bridget, recall thy words; rouse thy better self; think of thy Lord, who expects thee even to 'endure hardship.'"

A pause ensued most painful to all present. Bridget broke into passionate sobs and invectives, in which her mother and sisters joined. "Must it be so?" she had just said. "Unpardonable treatment on a wedding day!"

Archbishop Ussher just then drew near, with his lofty snow-crowned head and expressive face, and addressed Cromwell thus: "My friend General Cromwell, is it not said in Deuteronomy that on the eve of a battle the officers were to proclaim, 'What man is there that hath betrothed a wife, and hath not taken (married) her? Let him go and return to his house, lest he die in battle, and another man take her.' Should not you, as the highest officer in the army, make that proclamation now, and discharge your son-in-law?"

At length the General smiled, and said, "We must all be subject to Holy scripture from the lips of a respected interpreter. God speaks, and generals as well as officers must bow. I think I can take on me to give thee the order, Ireton, to remain at least till we hear to-morrow some further tidings, and may God make them favorable."

Before the party quite broke up, Cromwell came across Rudy, who was rather decidedly making court to his pretty youngest daughter. "Ah, boy, is that you whom I saw at Norwich? You see we have done marching to and fro, and have fought our battles right out, and won them."

"All right, General," answered the merry youngster, "but you broke your word."

"How so?" asked Cromwell with amusement.

"Oh, Rudolph!" said his playmate, "I won't talk with you any more. My father is the soul of truth!"

"Well, General," rejoined Rudy, a little overcast, "you promised to give me notice of these battles before they were over."

"But, lad, that was on condition you were old enough."

"Your pardon, General,—I ought to have grown faster, you see. But, General, do you think Colonel Ireton's lady will want a page?"

Cromwell laughed, and said, "I fear she is not in a humor to be consulted just now. You'll grow fast enough, I see!" As he turned away, Rudy was busy engaging Frances to ask her sister to take him as page, saying, "Didn't she stamp and cry out!—That's the sort of lady for me!"

"She'd tame you," laughed Frances.

When the Lady Gabrielle got home, her friend May retired with her to chat over the day's events.

May said, "Dear Gabrielle, how strange it seems that you and I, who once seemed so unlikely to have our present husbands, should be thus married, while Alice is so bereft."

"Oh, how I wished," answered Gabrielle, "for her and George to be with us to-night!—though your good husband grows more and more like him."

"I really think so," was the reply. "I know he wishes nothing so much. Even Cromwell noticed it to me to-day."

"Did he, indeed?" said the Countess. "He asked most gently after Alice, and said he thought George was too good for the intrigues and self-seeking which had already begun to work. 'The rising in worldly favor,' said he, 'and in political influence, is very corrupting. I see others dazzled and carried away by it. Already I accuse myself, in my private seasons of devotion, of yielding too much to the current. The holy Baxter, beside Goodwin and Ussher, have warned me. George has done a manful, straightforward soldier's duty, which is the easiest part. He is well out of the rest."

"Those are striking words," said May; "and we must remember them as some consolation to Alice, and to all George's sorrowing friends."

"They also bring to mind," said the Countess, "words of our own friend Milton in his Ode on the death of Lycidas:

"Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil
Nor in the glistening foil,
Set off to the world, nor in broad rumor lies,
But lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes,
And perfect witness of all-judging Jove,
As he pronounces lastly on each deed:
Of so much fame in Heaven expect thy meed."

When Will returned to Norwich, and related these events to his wife, Fanny and her husband, Gerhardt, were invited to discuss them, and they fell into a remembrance of the great changes they had witnessed.

"As to changes," Ann exclaimed, "I look back and think of your master the Fleming, and his sister Hannchen, living in Castle Meadow such a homely life, after being brought up like princes. I wonder they could bear it. They always seemed to me to be the real nobility."

"But, then," said Fanny, "I wonder how the Fleming's lady wife—Lady Gabrielle, who loves him so—could ever have rejected him. His sister too, my dear mistress, has found a Baron whom she loves better even than her brother."

"But what a change," said Will, "in Master Edward,—as proud a priest and hot a bigot as there was; and now to see him a Puritan, and so free and open to all!"

"But who ever thought May Hope would care for him," observed Ann, "when she used to joke and jibe at his Church ways till he seemed hot with wrath, while she was always playing with Master George?"

"And isn't our Rector changed!" said Will. "He was always good, but he is a strong Church man; and see, now that the old Church is set aside, how he is spreading his new churches all over the neighborhood!"

"And how different was our sweet widowed mistress," said Ann, "when she danced at the maypole, or parted from her brothers when they went to school, or disliked George's soldiering so as almost to give him up, from her who stood in the pillory with her father, and won the love of Rotterdam, and saved the Castle of Norwich, and nursed the soldiers, and suppressed her own sorrow to soothe the troubles of others! She has become more than a common woman."

"Let's look at home a little," quoth Will. "You are not the same person, my good wife, with your comely stout figure, your rather weighty person, and your matronly face, as the trim light maid I twirled round the maypole, and could hardly catch when I raced after her in the ring on the Green. But, wife, I will say also you are less tart and angry, and more easy and pleasant to live with now."

"Thank you blithely, my good Sergeant," rejoined Ann. "You, too, with your quiet ways and fondness for the fire nook, are very changed from the boy who was always in scrapes, who was one of the best leapers in the sports, one of the smartest soldiers of Master George's troop. But you are not changed to me, my good man. You've loved me well all along; and if I have sometimes chafed you, it has been all for your good."

Then Gerhardt, a little nervous at the personal turn the dialogue was taking, wisely turned the current by referring to the present condition of the nation as compared with the past.

"Nor is England herself less changed," said he, "from the time when I came here. Then it was a place where foreigners were hated,—where was no freedom to set up the most valuble trade,—where spies lurked everywhere, and it was perilous to speak what was in all hearts,—where all industry was taxed and fined as if it were a curse,—where there was liberty only to feast, drink, swear, gamble, and follow lustful pleasure;—while as to religion, if a man renounced it he was cast into prison, and if he professed it he was ever in danger of some inadvertent mistake. For him, however good and conscientious, the prison, the Star Chamber, the torture, or the cruel death was ready to blot out such a vile offender from British soil. But now this rule of misery is over, and a man may speak and think without fear: there is liberty in politics, and tolerance in religion,—all won by the deaths or heroic labors of men like Eliot, Cromwell, Fairfax, and Milton, of whom one may say, 'Fools tie knots, and wise men loose them.' And if I may make bold to hold your attention so long, I would recite delectable Master Southwell's lines on 'Times go by turns,' or, as the saying has it, 'Change of fortune is the lot of life':—

"The sea of Fortune doth not ever flow:
She draws her favors to the lowest ebb;
Her tides have equal times to come and go—
Her loom doth weave the fine and coarsest web:
No joy so great but runneth to an end,
No hap so hard but may in time amend.

Not always fall of leaf, nor ever spring;
Not endless night, nor yet eternal day;
The saddest birds a season find to sing,
The roughest storm a calm may soon allay:
Thus with succeeding turns God tempereth all,
That man may hope to rise, yet fear to fall."

THE END.

A HAPPY SIGHT.—Did you take pains to notice the operation of Holman's Pad upon a peevish, sick, irritable *baby*, that has suffered and cried its life nearly away, and which nothing has hitherto caused to thrive and be happy?

It is very interesting. The first sign of improvement is seen in the regularity and length of the little one's naps. Then come good appetite, regular bowels, the end of crying and worriment, and, finally, rosy, dimpled cheeks, bright eyes, and a tendency to get fat—in short, a bouncing, happy, beautiful baby.

And there has been no dosing, no strangulation, no destruction of the stomach by drugs. Just a natural cure in Nature's way. The father's heartache is gone, the poor, tired mother gets a rest, and baby—happy as the day is long—makes the whole house happy.

PRINCETON, N. J., June 8, 1881.

HOLMAN PAD CO.,

Gentlemen:—I was taken with the malarial fever the last of March, and suffered very much for nearly two months. I tried to take quinine in different forms, but it had such a severe effect on me that I could not and did not take it, but still suffered with the fever, and also chills occasionally. My case was pronounced by an eminent physician to be a case of malarial fever. I was induced to try your Pad, and I must say that I grew better every day after I applied it, and had no return of the fever or chills afterwards. I am now, I think, entirely well; at least I feel as well as ever. I took no medicine of any kind after putting on the Pad, and I attribute my cure entirely to it. I recommend it to every one afflicted as I was.

SARAH LEONARD.

1236 North 41st Street,
PHILADELPHIA, February 22, 1881.

HOLMAN PAD CO.,

Gentlemen:—My child, three years of age, was suffering agony caused by worms. We tried all the vermifuge and worm confections we could procure. At last we obtained a Holman Pad, put it on her, and it removed the worms in 24 hours. I advise any that have children suffering from worms to procure a Holman Pad. Yours respectfully,

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581 Only a Woman (Edited by Miss Braddon) 20
619 Taken at the Flood 20
641 Only a Clod 20
649 Publicans and Sinners 20
656 George Caulfield's Journey 10
665 The Shadow in the Corner 10
666 Bound to John Company; or, Robert Ainsleigh 20
701 Barbara; or, Splendid Misery 20
705 Put to the Test, Edited by Miss M. E. Braddon 20
734 Diavola; or, Nobody's Daughter. Part I 20
734 Diavola; or, Nobody's Daughter. Part II 20
811 Dudley Carleon 10
828 The Fatal Marriage 10
837 Just as I Am; or, A Living Lie 20
942 Asphodel 20

Charlotte and Emily Bronte's Works.

3 Jane Eyre (in smaller type) 10
162 Shirley 20
311 The Professor 10
329 Wuthering Heights 10
396 Jane Eyre (in bold, handsome type) 20
438 Villette 20
967 The Tenant of Wildfell Hall 20

RHODA BROUGHTON'S WORKS.

186 "Good-Bye, Sweetheart" 10
269 Red as a Rose is She 20
285 Cometh Up as a Flower 10
402 "Not Wisely, But Too Well" 20
458 Nancy 20
526 Joan 20
762 Second Thoughts 20

CAPT. FRED BURNABY'S WORKS.

448 On Horseback through Asia Minor 20
767 A Ride to Khiva 10

BEATRICE M. BUTT'S WORKS.

574 Delicia 20
605 Lester 10
856 Miss Molly 20
913 Passion Flowers 10

B. H. BUXTON'S WORKS.

831 Jennie of "The Prince's" 20
873 From the Wings 20
Scepter and Ring 20

THOMAS CARLYLE'S WORKS.

952 Carlyle's Essays on Characteristics, Richter, Burns, Luther's Psalm, Schiller, and Memoirs of Mirabeau, with a Biographical Sketch of Thomas Carlyle by C. N. Williamson 20
957 Reminiscences by Thomas Carlyle. Edited by James Anthony Froude 20
973 Essays on Goethe 20

Mrs. H. Lovett Cameron's Works.

182 Juliet's Guardian 10
356 Deceivers Ever 10

Rosa Nouchette Carey's Works.

385 Wooed and Married 20
708 Nellie's Memories 20
949 Queenie's Whim 20

CERVANTES' WORKS.

691 Don Quixote. Illustrated. Part I 10
691 Don Quixote. Illustrated. Part II 10
691 Don Quixote. Illustrated. Part III 10
691 Don Quixote. Illustrated. Part IV 10
691 Don Quixote. Illustrated. Part V 10

VICTOR CHERBULIEZ'S WORKS.

419 Mademoiselle Saint-Maur's Lover 10
432 Jean Teterol's Idea 10
435 Samuel Brohl and Company 10

HENRY COCKTON'S WORKS.

259 Valentine Vox (Part I.) 20
259 Valentine Vox (Part II.) 20

WILKIE COLLINS' WORKS.

10 The Woman in White 10
14 The Dead Secret 20
22 Man and Wife 20
32 The Queen of Hearts 20
38 Antonina 20
42 Hide and Seek 20
76 The New Magdalen 10
94 The Law and The Lady 20
180 Armadale 20
191 My Lady's Money 10
225 The Two Destinies 10
250 No Name 20
286 After Dark 10
409 The Haunted Hotel 10
433 A Shocking Story 10
487 A Rogue's Life 10
551 The Yellow Mask 10
771 The Woman in White (in large type) 20
583 Fallen Leaves 20
654 Poor Miss Finch 20
675 The Moonstone 20
696 Jezebel's Daughter 20
713 The Captain's Last Love 10
721 Basil 20
745 The Magic Spectacles 10
905 Duel in Herne Wood 10
928 Who Killed Zebedee? 10
971 The Frozen Deep 10
990 The Black Robe 20

J. FENIMORE COOPER'S WORKS.

222 Last of the Mohicans 20
224 The Deerslayer 20
226 The Pathfinder 20
229 The Pioneers 20
231 The Prairie 20
233 The Pilot 20
585 The Water-Witch 20
590 The Two Admirals 20
615 The Red Rover 20
761 Wing-and-Wing 20
940 The Spy 20
The Wyandotte 20

Lucy Randall Comfort's Works.

495 Claire's Love-Life 10
552 Love at Saratoga 20
672 Eve, the Factory Girl 20
716 Black Bell 20
854 Corisande 20
907 Three Sewing Girls 20
1019 His First Love 20

Rev. W. J. Conybeare and Rev. J. S. Howson's Works.

730 The Life and Epistles of the Apostle Paul. First Half 20
730 The Life and Epistles of the Apostle Paul. Second Half 20

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252 Hard to Bear 10
506 Sylvia's Choice 20
543 Anne Warwick 10
798 Leslie Tyrrell 10
916 Faith Unwin's Ordeal 20

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557 Sidonie 20
561 The Nabob 20
578 Jack 10
719 Kings in Exile 20

CHARLES DICKENS' WORKS.

20 The Old Curiosity Shop 20
100 A Tale of Two Cities 20
102 Hard Times 10
118 Great Expectations 20
187 David Copperfield 20
200 Nicholas Nickleby 20
213 Barnaby Rudge 20
218 Dombey and Son 20
239 No Thoroughfare (Charles Dickens and Wilkie Collins) 10
247 Martin Chuzzlewit 20
272 The Cricket on the Hearth 10
284 Oliver Twist 20
289 A Christmas Carol 10
292 The Haunted Man 10
304 Little Dorrit 20
308 The Chimes 10
317 The Battle of Life 10
325 Our Mutual Friend 20
337 Bleak House 20
352 Pickwick Papers 20
359 Somebody's Luggage 10
367 Mrs. Lirriper's Lodgings 10
372 The Lazy Tour of Two Idle Apprentices 10
375 Mugby Junction 10
403 Tom Tiddler's Ground 10
498 The Uncommercial Traveler 20
521 Master Humphrey's Clock 10
625 Sketches by Boz 20
639 Sketches of Young Couples 10
827 The Mudfog Papers, &c 10
860 The Mystery of Edwin Drood 20
900 Pictures From Italy 10

Hon. Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield's, Works.

255 Lothair 20
392 Vivian Grey 20
405 Henrietta Temple 20
884 Endymion 20
918 Tancred; or, The New Crusade 20
933 The Young Duke 20
969 Coningsby; or, The New Generation 20
983 Contarini Fleming 20
994 Miriam Alroy 20
999 Venetia 20
1002 Ixion 10
1009 Sybil 20

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618 Madolin's Lover 20
656 A Golden Dawn 10
678 A Dead Heart 10
718 Lord Lynne's Choice; or, True Love Never Runs Smooth 10
746 Which Loved Him Best 20
846 Dora Thorne 20
921 At War with Herself 10
931 The Sin of a Lifetime 20
1013 Lady Gwendoline's Dream 10
1018 Wife in Name Only 20

RICHARD DOWLING'S WORKS.

896 High-Water Mark 10
929 Under St. Paul's 20
Strawberry Leaves 20

F. DU BOISGOBEY'S WORKS.

709 The Old Age of Monsieur Lecoq. Part I. 20
709 The Old Age of Monsieur Lecoq. Part II 20

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683 Called to the Rescue 20
823 The Story of a Shower 10

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258 Phyllis 10
393 Molly Bawn 20
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1010 Mrs. Geoffrey 10

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172 The Chevalier de Maison Rouge 20
184 The Countess de Charny 20
188 Nanon 10
193 Joseph Balsamo; or, Memoirs of a Physician 20
194 The Conspirators 10
198 Isabel of Bavaria 10
201 Catherine Blum 10
223 The Marriage Verdict 10
228 The Regent's Daughter 10
244 The Three Guardsmen 20
268 Forty-five Guardsmen 20
276 The Page of the Duke of Savoy 10
278 Six Years Later; or, Taking of the Bastile 20
283 Twenty Years After 20
298 Captain Paul 10
306 Three Strong Men 10
318 Ingenue 20
331 Adventures of a Marquis (first half) 20
331 Adventures of a Marquis (second half) 20
342 The Mohicans of Paris 10
344 Ascanio 20
608 The Watchmaker 20
616 The Two Dianas 20
622 Andree de Taverney 20
664 Vicomte de Bragelonne (1st Series) 20
664 Vicomte de Bragelonne (2d Series) 20
664 Vicomte de Bragelonne (3rd Series) 20
664 Vicomte de Bragelonne (4th Series) 20
688 Chicot, the Jester 20
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472 Debenham's Vow..... 20
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867 Miss Carew..... 20

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148 A Blue Stocking..... 10
154 A Point of Honor..... 10
361 A Vagabond Heroine..... 10
387 Jet: Her Face or Her Fortune?..... 10
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594 Archie Lovell..... 20
635 Ought We to Visit Her?..... 20
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113 Golden Grain..... 10
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149 Joshua Marvel..... 20
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324 Shadows on the Snow..... 10
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620 In a Country House..... 10
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894 My Hero..... 20

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840 The Wellfields..... 20
Kith and Kin..... 20

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713 Esther's Glove..... 10
904 Queen Cophetua..... 20
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780 John Bunyan..... 10
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465 Monsieur Lecoq (first half)..... 20
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476 The Slaves of Paris (first half)..... 20
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494 The Mystery of Orcival..... 20
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741 The Downward Path; or, A House Built on Sand (La Degringolade). Part I..... 20
741 The Downward Path; or, A House Built on Sand (La Degringolade). Part II..... 20
758 The Little Old Man of the Batignolles..... 10
778 The Men of the Bureau..... 10
789 Promises of Marriage..... 10
813 The 13th Hussars..... 10
834 A Thousand Francs Reward..... 10
899 Max's Marriage; or, The Viscount's Choice 10

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125 Mary Barton..... 10
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682 Queen of the Meadow..... 20
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17 Hidden Perils..... 10
434 Hidden Perils (in larger type)..... 20
23 The Squire's Legacy..... 10
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275 A Shadow on the Threshold..... 10
363 Reaping the Whirlwind..... 10
384 Back to the Old Home..... 10
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493 A Golden Sorrow..... 20
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739 Christy Carew..... 20
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146 Charles O'Malley, the Irish Dragoon (Triple Number)..... 30
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169 St. Patrick's Eve..... 10
174 Kate O'Donoghue..... 20
257 That Boy of Norcott's..... 10
296 Tom Burke of Ours (first half)..... 20
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319 Davenport Dunn (second half)..... 20
464 Gerald Fitzgerald..... 20
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529 Lord Kilgobbin..... 20
540 Maurice Tiernay..... 20
566 A Day's Ride..... 20
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633 Sir Jasper Carew, Knight..... 20
657 The Martins of Cro' Martin (Part I)..... 20
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703 The Root of all Evil..... 20
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ALICE BRIDGE OF NORWICH.
By the Rev. ANDREW REED, B.A.

This Number contains a Complete Story, Unchanged and Unabridged.

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Alice Bridge of Norwich:

A TALE OF THE TIME OF CHARLES THE FIRST.

By the Rev. ANDREW REED, B.A.

DEDICATION.

This Tale is affectionately dedicated to the Wife and Children of the Author, for whom it was written, and by whose warm appreciation he was first encouraged.

The Book may also interest those Norwich friends who remember the writer's happy residence in their old City as a Christian Minister, where he gained that knowledge of localities, and that historic interest in the romance of Puritan times, which gave birth to this story, and lend it whatever attraction it may be found to possess.

The Author takes the opportunity to thank his dear brother, Sir Charles Reed, for many historical and antiquarian suggestions while the work was passing through the press, and for access to important papers.

May the volume help to revive the serious piety, the self-denying virtue, and the noble public spirit for which our Puritan ancestors were so distinguished.

St. Leonards-on-Sea,
October, 1879.

CHAPTER I.

TOMBLAND CLERK-ALE.

"On every spray blooms lovely May,
And balmy zephyrs breathe;
Ethereal splendor all above,
And beauty all beneath.

The cuckoo's song, the woods among,
Sounds sweetly as of old,
As bright and warm the sunbeams shine,—
Oh, why should hearts grow cold?"
Old Song.

An old rhyme says,

"Caistor was a city when Norwich was none,
And Norwich was built of Caistor stone,"—

in which is perpetuated the removal of the city from the Roman station of Caistor (Castrum), to the Norman *vicus* of the present Norwich. Vainglorious little Caistor, whose stones and reputation were thus shamefully plundered, is still a village some three miles from Norwich.

The present City was brought together for shelter under the Castle, a royal fortress in a commanding situation, which then afforded the protection required for the prosecution of peaceful trades. The City was once one of England's chief places of wealth and strength. In the times of which we shall speak it was remarkable for a steadfast adherence to the cause of liberty as opposed to the despotism of the Stuarts. Norwich still remains a populous, active, manufacturing city, though its monopoly of the Flemish wares and of the Indian bombazine trade has passed away; and it still retains a conspicuous love of constitutional liberty, but of that quality also it can pretend to no monopoly at present.

Alice Bridge standing by her father in the pillory.

Just outside the precincts of its Cathedral, called the Close, there is a large open space surrounded by respectable mansions, which bears the quaint and melancholy name of Tombland, either from its having been a burying ground or from its being the scene of desperate conflicts between the City and the Close—a sort of debatable land claimed by both parties.

There are no graves now on Tombland, nor was it at all a melancholy spot on a certain Sunday of May, 1627, for the parish of St. George's was holding its clerk ale on the Green. The Green is intersected by a busy highway running down a gentle slope, and on either side tables were set out on the grassy triangles like booths at a fair, sheltered from the wind and weather by coverings of boughs or tent cloth. The tables were covered with pewter and earthenware mugs, while great jacks and tankards full of ale, together with large dishes of bread, meat, cheese, cakes, and butter, completed the provision for the expected feast. These attractive viands were sent in freely by the parishioners as presents to the Clerk, whose privilege it was to give the entertainment and realize the benefit of it. Like the landlord of a public-house, he charged ample payment on his guests, and thus by a double profit eked out his poor stipend.

A large share of the good things came from the Alderman's house, situated in Tombland, and those thought themselves happy who feasted on some of Dame Sherwood's cakes and pastry, for which she was famed through the City. Another liberal donor was the great Flemish manufacturer, Van Diense, who employed hundreds of weavers, and was at the head of that important industry. Nor were the Rector and his lady wanting in hearty liberality on the occasion of their Clerk's benefit. The Clerk's wife, with some of her gossips, was busily arranging the provisions in momentary expecta-

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